

Debating Assassination Educator Ken Rahn

Chris Dolmar

[Editor's note: There are some members of the assassination research community who choose to educate those too young to have lived through the events of 22 November 1963 and its aftermath. These educators carry a great responsibility to present the events in as objective a fashion as is possible; this is particularly important when the material is being presented in a college unit for which students need to obtain credit. Professor Ken Rahn offered such a course at the University of Rhode Island. In 2001 Chris Dolmar came across Rahn's website describing his college course, and believed that it misrepresented the facts of the JFK assassination. Dolmar's email exchange with Rahn, reproduced below in the form posted by Dolmar in 2001, is highly enlightening. One must only wonder: would Rahn's college students have received the same treatment if they dared to ask questions during his course? (Note: acronyms used in the original e-mail correspondence, commonly used by assassination researchers but possibly confusing to the general reader, have been expanded out in full.)]

Hi everybody,

I've been busy this summer [2001], but have still had time to participate in various arenas of the JFK case, and thought I would share my correspondences with a Dr. Ken Rahn, a professor teaching a course on the JFK Assassination at the University of Rhode Island. He teaches this course as part of a "critical thinking" model in which his students are funneled toward a "Lee-Harvey-Oswald-could-have-easily-done-it-alone" conclusion. He has a website supporting his course at karws.gso.uri.edu/JFK/JFK.html. Instead of an in-depth review, it appeared to me that Dr. Rahn and his alleged critical thinking review was as biased as anyone's, based on what was shown in the "further thoughts" section of his course outline:

1. There is overwhelming physical evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald killed JFK.
2. There is an overwhelming absence of evidence that anyone else was involved.
3. No other credible suspects, general or named, have emerged after 37 years [in 2001] of intensive investigation.
4. Thus, the exceedingly strong working hypothesis must be that Lee Harvey Oswald did it alone.
5. The logical and procedural errors of the critics and conspiracists are so clear and obvious that further discussion of conspiracy is no longer justified without solid new evidence.
6. Given that no conspiracy has emerged in 37 years, there is no reason to expect the present situation to change (although it could at any time).

7. Therefore, the era of national soul-searching and angst that followed the JFK assassination, and the accompanying distrust in the government that it fostered, were unnecessary and hurtful.
8. The spotlight should have been turned inward on the critics, rather than outward on the government. Recognizing these things, we are now ready to write the simple, clear, and true history of the assassination.

Obviously, when the “teacher” puts statements like that into a course outline, the direction of that course has already been pre-determined. As such, the students in the class already know what is necessary—though not necessarily correct—to obtain a good grade. Challenging a tenured professor’s stated opinion would hardly help achieve a good mark, and most students understand that. Others attempting to debate aspects of the assassination might also feel intimidated, confronted by the prestige of his professional standing.

I believe we should hold our educators to higher standards in their methodology. They influence many potential leaders and are looked up to by the masses of the populace. As such, they must be totally objective, something apparently lost in this case. Anything less than complete integrity risks creating and perpetuating a false history. And so I decided to engage our esteemed Dr. Rahn in an evidence debate to see just how strongly he could hold up to a lowly Alaskan wilderness guide, in support of his university course objectives.

Following is our email debate. My initial email, 6 June 2001, 9:25 pm:

Hi Mr. Rahn,

My name is Chris Dolmar and I’m writing to you from the far south coast of Alaska. After studying the JFK event since about the age of 15, when I saw a bootlegged copy of the Zapruder film shown on an early Geraldo Rivera TV show, I have personally come to the conclusion that the evidence surrounding CE-139 [(Warren) Commission Exhibit 139, a rifle allegedly found in the Texas School Book Depository] indicates that *nobody*, much less Lee Harvey Oswald, could have performed the shooting skills required to accomplish the assassination as presented by the Warren Commission to the American people.

What the evidence and testimony actually showed

The two Sheriff’s Deputies who found a rifle on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, and a highly decorated deputy who saw it before it was taken from the floor, *all* identified it as a “7.65 mm Mauser”. Subsequent documents and affidavits filed by these deputies continued to identify it in that same manner (Commission Exhibit Decker 5323). CIA documents still identified it as a “Mauser”, four days later. One of the officers, decorated Deputy Sheriff, Roger Craig, continued to insist that this identification was correct, even after his testimony before the Warren Commission. He maintained that the gun he saw had the word “MAUSER” stamped on the barrel. Craig also told researchers that his Warren Commission testimony had been altered in fourteen different places by Warren Commission counsel David Belin, so that it appears to be “bland” in the 26 volumes [of Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits].

Another of the deputies in question, Constable Seymour Weitzman, had also sold rifles while working for many years in a sporting goods store, and therefore had a vast amount of experience in both handling and identifying them. Police officers are trained to properly observe and notate evidence. In fact, their observations are more readily accepted in a court of law than those of most other witnesses. The Warren Commission Report attempts to slide past this “problem” with the weapon by saying that the deputies only had a “glance” at the weapon. The tape recording of a news broadcast of 22 November 1963 on Dallas radio station K-BOX said (CE-304):

Sheriff's Deputies identify the rifle as a seven point sixty-five Mauser, a German-made Army rifle with a telescopic sight. It had one shell in the chamber. Three spent shells were found nearby.

Additionally, in his book *On the Trail of the Assassins*, Jim Garrison claims to have viewed a Dallas TV newsreel from that day, which he stated shows a police officer bringing another rifle down the fire escape from the roof. Five separate documents with descriptions of the rifle originally found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository were missing from the FBI files on the President's assassination when presented to the Warren Commission. Those documents were:

1. Dallas Police Department Lt. Carl Day's dictated memorandum on the weapon;
2. Day's description to the FBI's Special Agent Bardwell Odum;
3. Odum's subsequent description, which was broadcast over FBI radio;
4. Constable Weitzman's original report to the FBI; and
5. Dallas Police Department Detective C. N. Dhority's written report.

The legal “chain of possession” of CE-139 was never properly established. The officers who found a gun should have either marked it for identification purposes immediately, or watched as the detective who removed it did so. Neither identification procedure took place at the scene. It appears that this was finally done some six hours later, at Dallas Police Department Headquarters, after the found weapon had passed through countless other hands, and had allegedly lain in the evidence room for several hours.

What chain of possession that existed after that was again broken when the rifle was taken to FBI Headquarters in Washington, DC, by FBI Special Agent Vincent Drain on the night of 22 November 1963, unaccompanied by any officer of the Dallas Police Department. In 1963, even though threatening the President was a federal crime, the assassination of a President was not. It was merely considered an all-too-common, local murder. This meant that the FBI had no jurisdiction whatsoever in the case. If the weapon needed to be sent to an FBI lab for analysis, it needed to be accompanied by a Dallas officer to maintain the legal “chain of possession”. The reasons behind this continuous improper handling of such vital evidence, in such a high profile case, by highly trained local and federal officers, are very suspicious. This type of handling would have been questionable enough for the weapon to have been excluded from the evidence in any trial of Lee Harvey Oswald. Therefore, how fortunate for them that there was no trial.

Despite all the controversy over the initial “misidentification” of the rifle, at no time did the Warren Commission show CE-139 to any of the Dallas law enforcement officers who found it, nor ask them, point blank, if CE-139 was indeed the weapon that they had found. What they showed them were photographs, not the weapon itself. Not one of those Dallas witnesses could positively state that the weapon in the photos was the weapon that they had found. Even today, you and I can only see photographs of this infamous weapon at the National Archives. We cannot see, nor measure, the weapon itself.

The paper bag found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository showed no signs of any gunpowder residue, nor any gun oil, and contained no verifiable fingerprints (a partial palm print that had some characteristics similar to Oswald’s palm print was found; however, there were too few similarities for a legal match), according to the examination the FBI conducted of it. The package’s size was also too small to have contained CE-139, unless the rifle had been broken down (CE-1304). Next, when broken down, the weapon contained a number of sharp-edged parts which, logically, should have made some scratches or tears in the paper, had it been in there. Not only were there no scratches or tears, there wasn’t a single crease which the FBI could match to any part of CE-139. Basically, we find that there was no physical evidence that any gun had ever been inside the bag found on the sixth floor and alleged by the Warren Commission to have carried CE-139 from Irving, Texas to the Texas School Book Depository that day. If the rifle had been broken down for transport, its accuracy would have been compromised even further, by not having the ability to be sighted-in after re-assembly.

Military experts stated that a minimum of ten shots would have been required, adjusting the scope after each, to re-sight any rifle for accurate shooting. Both Buell Frazier and Linnie Randle, the only people to have seen it, testified that the package Lee Harvey Oswald had in Frazier’s car was no more than 26 inches in length, yet the longest part of CE-139, even when broken down, was 34.8 inches (CE-1303). Frazier further testified that when Oswald laid the package in the back seat of the car, it took up less than half of the length of the seat. The back seat’s total length was 62 inches. Frazier also testified that when they arrived at work, Oswald took the package out of the back seat and, holding one end in the palm of his hand, tucked the other end under his arm. For the package Frazier saw to have contained CE-139, even broken down, would have required Oswald to have an arm length of over 36 inches. Rather amazing for a man of 5’9” (2 WCH [Volume 2, Warren Commission Hearings] 210–245).

We see, therefore, that there was also absolutely no testimony with which to corroborate the Warren Commission Report conclusion about how Oswald allegedly got the rifle into the Depository, either. How and why, then, was this conclusion drawn? While the Warren Commission Report used, as evidence, an FBI document (Dallas 89-43), which states that the FBI laboratory found that the materials used to construct the paper bag, entered into evidence, to be consistent with materials found at the Texas School Book Depository, and could have also been constructed from them, researcher Livingstone in his book *High Treason* shows another copy of that same document which says that the materials were not similar. While there is no way to categorically determine which is the correct copy, there would appear to be no logical reason for the FBI to have revised the report to deny the similarities, then enter the incorrect one into evidence. However, if my belief that they altered evidence is correct, then changing the report from “not similar” to “similar” fits in quite nicely with that scenario.

FBI tests of CE-139's accuracy showed that the rifle was:

1. inaccurate from 15 yards (CE-549);
2. carrying a scope that was mounted for a left-handed shooter (CE-2560) (Lee Harvey Oswald was right-handed); and was
3. unable to be sighted in, using the scope, without the installation of two metal shims, which were not present when the rifle arrived for testing, nor notated in any previous description of CE-139 (3 WCH 440–5).

Nothing resembling a shim was found at the Texas School Book Depository, Oswald's room in Oak Cliff, or on his person when arrested. During efforts, supervised by the FBI, to duplicate the shooting accuracy allegedly achieved, no FBI, military, civilian, or National Rifle Association expert was ever able to match the concluded performance, while using CE-139 in the condition it was found, nor within the time frame established, let alone under conditions similar to those faced by a shooter crouched in the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository on 22 November 1963. These re-creations took place on 27 November 1963, 16 March 1964, and 27 March 1964. None of these attempts were made under circumstances that came remotely close to the difficulties and pressures that would have been encountered by a gunman in that sixth floor window, and yet they still all failed to duplicate the feats attributed to Oswald. Later efforts, sponsored by the House Select Committee on Assassinations Firearms Panel, were successful in hitting three stationary targets within the time frames. However, they used a different rifle, albeit a similar Mannlicher-Carcano, and fired using open-sights, instead of the scope, and, again, from a different position, angle, and under different circumstances than would have been encountered by Lee Harvey Oswald, or anyone else, crouched in the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository (3 WCH 390–430).

In addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations testimony of Firearms Panel member Monty Lutz shows his opinion of the scope (HSCA 1 449):

Mr. LUTZ: This is a four-power Ordinance Optics telescopic sight with a cross-hair reticle.

Mr. MCDONALD: Would you, in your opinion, classify it as an accurate scope?

Mr. LUTZ: The accuracy is fairly undependable, as far as once getting the rifle sighted in, and it is very cheaply made, the scope itself has a crosshair reticle that is subject to movement, or being capable of being dislodged from dropping, from impact, or a very sharp recoil. So, the accuracy would be somewhat questionable for this particular type of a scope.

Why the House Select Committee on Assassinations experts did not use the real exhibit is another valid question that has never been answered. Perhaps it was because the original examination by the FBI in 1963–1964 showed that CE-139 was inaccurate at fifteen yards—or someone involved knew that the shooting could not be duplicated using that weapon.

Former House Select Committee on Assassinations Firearms Panel member Lutz, an expert rifleman himself, later confirmed these failures. He stated, in a 1986 mock Oswald trial sponsored by the BBC, that, to his knowledge, no one had ever duplicated Lee Harvey Oswald's alleged shooting feats using CE-139 in the condition it was found. Also, in this regard, Craig Roberts, a Marine Corps sniper with combat experience in Vietnam, professional law enforcement officer,

and world-class rifleman, states in his book *Kill Zone* that even using his precise equipment loaded with matched rounds, he could not have equaled the shooting process assumed by the Warren Commission to have taken place. It is very hard to disregard such statements by an expert who has actually looked out on Elm Street from the “sniper’s window”.

Mr. Roberts is not the only expert to feel this way. In fact, efforts to duplicate the shooting expertise were attempted by agencies within the governments of Cuba, Israel, and the USSR. All reached the same conclusion: The shooting, as outlined by the Warren Commission, was virtually impossible!

The time frames required were established by the FBI after the review and calculation of time between shots shown on the Zapruder film, also taking into consideration the time required to operate CE-139, and the view from the sixth floor. The House Select Committee on Assassinations findings concluded that only if Oswald had fired using open sights could he have fired three shots accurately within the Warren Commission Report time frames. No possible scenario that included any additional gunmen was ever considered, meaning all shots must have come from that rifle and during the designated time frames.

Dallas Police Department searches of Oswald’s room in Oak Cliff, and his family’s residence in Irving, failed to unearth any additional ammunition, or any cleaning supplies normally associated with the operation of a rifle. In fact, additional checks by agents of the Treasury Department’s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms failed to find any evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Alec Hidell [his alleged alias] had ever purchased any ammunition for the rifle, either. Yet an FBI memorandum described the rifle, when presented to them, as being in “... a well-oiled condition ...”.

Additional ammunition would have been needed to practice, and that same FBI memorandum, signed by Director J. Edgar Hoover himself, noted that an examination of the firing pin showed that “numerous” shots had been fired through CE-139 (CE-2974). Also, the three experts who first test-fired the rifle showed concern that the firing pin might break because it was rusted (3 WCH 444).

Ammunition isn’t purchased one bullet at a time. The minimum would be a box of twenty. It would be inconsistent with the way Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly purchased the weapon for him to hide the purchase of the ammunition. And rusted firing pins are not what one would consider suitable for a rifle being used in such a high-profile political assassination ... what if it broke on the first shot?

FBI searches of every gun range in the greater Dallas–Fort Worth area failed to come up with even a single shell casing that could be matched to CE-139. In all, literally millions of used casings were reviewed, and 13,000 possible Mannlicher-Carcano casings were recovered and compared. None ballistically matched CE-139. This lack of physical evidence came despite the testimony of several witnesses who told stories of a man, allegedly Lee Harvey Oswald, practicing at various ranges with a high-powered rifle, and being very visible in doing so—in some cases going out of his way to draw attention to himself. The fact is that the FBI could find absolutely no physical evidence which showed that Lee Harvey Oswald had ever purchased ammunition, or practiced firing CE-139. Yet again, in spite of this lack of evidence, not only did the Warren Commission Report conclude that he had, but they also concluded that he became so good at shooting that he could make shots that documented experts could not.

The length of CE-139 and the length of the rifle depicted in the advertisement allegedly used to order it, from the February 1963 issue of *American Rifleman* magazine, are significantly different. The weapon depicted in that advertisement, a Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 mm Italian Carbine, model #C20-T750, is 36 inches long, assembled. This is the weapon reportedly shipped on 20 March 1963 to:

A. Hidell
P.O. Box 2915
Dallas, Texas

The length of CE-139 is 40.2 inches assembled, and it is model #C20-750. Representatives of Klein's Sporting Goods were unable to adequately explain these differences (CE-773). Also, the FBI records of the length of the rifle they tested show three different figures, none of which was 36 inches. (*Note:* the author owns a Mannlicher-Carcano of the same model as CE-139. Its length is 40.2 inches.) Klein's was also able to state how it was paid for (postal money order), when it was deposited, *and* they were able to produce both the envelope it was received in, and the stamp used to mail the order to them!

While the serial number of CE-139—C2766—was the same as that of the weapon shipped by Klein's to A. Hidell, the FBI discovered that, due to the manufacturing techniques used by Italy during World War II, this serial number was not necessarily unique to only one such weapon. In fact, it is possible that as many as five different rifles could have had the serial number C2766. The FBI eventually traced another Carcano, serial number C2766, to Canada. In addition, Scottish researcher and friend, Bill MacDowall, has done significant research in this area and has traced the rifle mailed by Klein's to A. Hidell all the way back to its manufacturer. He has found evidence that *all* identifying markings were supposedly removed prior to Klein's purchase of the weapon. Bill has written an extensive paper on this weapon. [*Editor's note:* Researcher Jack White has further shown that the serial number C2766 shown in two different photographs of CE-139 are demonstrably different, despite being superficially similar. See p. 98 of *The Great Zapruder Film Hoax.*]

While evidence showed that the rifle from Klein's was shipped to the post office box of Lee Harvey Oswald, no one knows for sure who actually took possession of it on its arrival. For Oswald to have received it, the Dallas Post Office would have needed to violate Postal Regulations since it was addressed to "Hidell", and it was Oswald's P.O. box. Amazingly, the FBI was able to track this weapon to the retailer (Klein's) even before Special Agent Vince Drain actually took possession of it at 11:30 pm that first night. This is truly amazing since, as late as 9:00 pm on the night of 22 November, Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade was still calling it a "Mauser", and, other than the serial number, there was nothing to go on to search for its owner.

That serial number was only worthwhile if the FBI knew the manufacturer, and in this case even that would not have been enough, since more than one Mannlicher-Carcano had that serial number. Yet by 11:00 pm government agents were already at Klein's to look up the purchase and shipping orders, despite the fact that the retailer would have been next-to-last on the possession time-line.

Few of the eyewitnesses who testified that they saw a gun firing from the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository described anything similar to CE-139. Several felt that the weapon was an automatic rifle because of the speed of the firing, and those few witnesses who testified as to seeing a scope

mounted on the rifle they saw did not see the rifle actually being fired. There is no notation, anywhere within the twenty-six volumes of evidence, that either the Dallas Police Department or the FBI ever tested CE-139 to see if it had been fired recently—they simply assumed that it had been fired that day. This, despite the fact that no one testified to smelling gunpowder in or around the “sniper’s nest”, and with no notations that forensic examinations of the boxes showed any traces of gunpowder residue.

Documents concerning what was recovered from the sixth floor all state that one live round was in the chamber when the rifle was found. One live round was also turned over to the FBI. The problems with this are generally overlooked. They are:

1. None of the witnesses who testified as to seeing the shots fired spoke of seeing the shooter eject a round after the fatal head shot, meaning a spent cartridge, not a live round, should have been in the chamber.
2. If the shooter did eject the fired round, why would he do it after moving away from the window?
3. And if he did so, why were all three casings allegedly recovered together?

If it was Lee Harvey Oswald who did this, we must factor in the additional delay that ejecting the final spent round, for reasons unknown, would have on his ability to wipe the gun clean of prints, hide it, and still be on the first floor no more than ninety seconds after firing the fatal shot.

Do you have any opinions, input, feedback, or any other comments relating to these issues concerning CE-139 as I have expressed them?

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Chris Dolmar

Rahn’s response, 11 June 2001, 11:03 am:

Dear Chris,

Thanks for your note. I just returned from two weeks of traveling and found it last night. I do indeed have much to say about your views, but I don’t know when I will get time enough.

Basically, you are emphasizing the apparent negatives and avoiding all the positive physical evidence that shows that the assassination was an easily do-able feat. I urge you to take more time on the sites maintained by John McAdams and me. More later, but I don’t know quite when.

Best regards,
Ken Rahn

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My second email to Rahn, 28 June 2001, 2:14 am:

Hello Mr. Rahn,

No doubt you are a busy man as I am, but I thought I would maintain our correspondence regarding CE-139.

I think, as was outlined in my initial email to you, that the ability of *the weapon* itself, is in serious question as to whether it (CE-139) could have been remotely mechanically capable of accomplishing the accuracy attributed to it by the Single Bullet Theory and the Warren Commission, the shooting skills of the alleged assassin notwithstanding.

The only way the assassination “could have been an easily do-able feat”, as you stated to me previously, is if Lee Harvey Oswald had acted like the *lone* gunman that the Warren Commission portrays him as, and taken the *best* percentage shot he had—which was a straight away, dead-on, head shot at Kennedy as the limousine was traveling down Houston Street—almost straight at him—before it took the dog-leg left turn onto Elm Street.

But Lee Harvey Oswald was, allegedly, using a rifle (CE-139) which the FBI determined was:

1. *inaccurate* at 15 yards;
2. had a scope mounted for a *left*-handed shooter (Lee Harvey Oswald was a *right*-handed shooter); and
3. was missing two metal shims that further compromised its accuracy;

and that Lee Harvey Oswald, the lone gunman, *still* passed up “The Perfect Shot” on Houston Street, for a tree-filtered, going-away, *much* lower-percentage shot on Elm Street.

Why did Lee Harvey Oswald pass on the *easy* Houston Street shot? And let’s not debate the difficulty of the Houston and Elm Street shots:

1. The Houston Street shot would have been, *by far*, the *easiest* shot for *any* shooter in the, alleged, “sniper’s nest” of the Texas School Book Depository;
2. especially a “lone nut assassin”, who (in his mind) would have known that *only* he would have *one* chance to kill the President.

Knowing these odds, as a lone assassin, in your opinion, Mr. Rahn, why didn’t Lee Harvey Oswald take the high percentage, easy shot on Houston Street?

Sincerely,
Chris Dolmar

Rahn’s response, 28 June 2001, 5:28 am:

Chris,

I cannot pretend to get inside Oswald’s head. I can only say that the shot on Houston Street has a couple of obvious disadvantages:

- The Secret Service agents would be looking right at him.

- And, Gov. Connally would have blocked much of Kennedy's body.

I think I also heard something about the metallic "rollbar" blocking something as well, but I can't really remember.

I believe you are overstating the inaccuracy of the rifle. But, your arguments are made moot by the fact that each of the two bullets recovered was traceable ballistically to that rifle, to the exclusion of all others. We also know that the bullets were not planted, because fragments from JFK's brain and Connally's wrist matched the larger fragments chemically.

In general, I think that it is an error to start asking "Why?" too soon. First, we settle what happened, and only then do we worry about why.

Ken Rahn

My follow-up email to Rahn, 25 August 2001, 2:53 pm:

Hello Mr. Rahn,

It's been a couple of months since we corresponded. This is the biggest push of the year, business-wise, for me, and thus my infrequent exchanges.

I thought I would continue our correspondence regarding some of the issues you last mentioned.

You said:

But your arguments are made moot by the fact that each of the two bullets recovered was traceable ballistically to that rifle to the exclusion of all others.

From what I can ascertain, allegedly, no human matter of any kind was found on CE-399 [a bullet] despite the necessary assumption that it had caused numerous wounds, nor was it recovered from either victim's body. It, therefore, could not be scientifically linked to either Kennedy or Connally. In fact, in what appears to be an effort to hide this, the Warren Commission leads FBI Special Agent Robert Frazier through contradictory testimony about CE-399 (3 WCH 228-244). He finally states, however, that, even under microscopic examination, no blood nor human tissue were found.

No striation marks (tiny scratches) were found by the FBI on the bulbous, undamaged nose of CE-399, despite allegedly going through JFK's jacket, shirt, possibly nicking his tie, John Connally's jacket, shirt, shirt, jacket, jacket, shirt, shirt, jacket, and pants. Striation marks, around the nose, are common even when bullets are fired only into cotton for ballistic comparison purposes. Because of this, CE-399 cannot scientifically be determined to have gone through either man's clothes, much less both.

No traces of copper were found on JFK's tie. This is very inconsistent with the copper traces found in the other clothes and/or wounds of both men. CE-399 is copper-jacketed. If traces of copper were found on JFK's suit (entrance), and in John Connally's wounds (entrance and exit), logic would dictate that there should be traces on the tie (JFK exit), *if* they were caused by the same bullet or even the same type of bullet.

In addition, the testimony of every one of the autopsy doctors and the physician who treated Connally at Parkland stated that none of them could believe that CE-399 could have caused all the wounds because of its “pristine” condition and because too much metal was removed or remained in the victims. Their testimony on this point was unequivocal (2 WCH 374–5, 382; 4 WCH 109, 113–4).

Dr. Shaw’s testimony about the wound in John Connally’s thigh (4 WCH 109–135) is extremely important, yet almost always overlooked. For the Single Bullet Theory to hold up, the wound to Connally must have been made by the complete bullet (CE-399) which later “fell out”. The wound must therefore show these characteristics. Shaw’s testimony, while ambiguous on this point, appears to describe the wound as being made by a fragment, not a complete bullet. CE-399 is not a fragment, and the largest fragment that could have come from it would have been no more than three grains, hardly large enough to cause a treatable wound.

Additionally, Dr. Shaw has told researcher Livingstone that the thigh wound was indeed caused by a fragment, larger than five grains. The Parkland Hospital report on Connally (CE-392), appears to corroborate this point, and Dr. Shaw again identified the thigh wound as being made by a fragment in the Nova documentary *Who Killed President Kennedy?* This seriously undermines the theory that CE-399 fell out of John Connally’s leg while he was on the stretcher, and that CE-399 caused all his wounds.

In addition, fragments too large to have come from CE-399 show up in X-rays of Connally. Parkland nurse, Audrey Bell, described these fragments as “anywhere from 3–4 millimeters in length by a couple of millimeters wide” (*Dallas Morning News* interview, 1 April 1977). Finally, Dr. Charles Gregory, who worked on Connally, testified (6 WCH 122–3) that he saw multiple fragments that were large enough for him to determine their color.

Darrel Tomlinson, the Parkland hospital employee who recovered the bullet from a stretcher in the hall of the emergency room, required much cross-examination by Commission counsel Arlen Specter before he would say that it was even possible that the stretcher in question was the one that carried John Connally. His initial—and vigorously maintained—testimony was that the bullet he found came from a stretcher that had not been used by either Connally or Kennedy (6 WCH 130–4). He has stood by that contention ever since (Nova, 15 November 1988). Neither Tomlinson, O. P. Wright, Secret Service Agent Richard Johnsen, nor Secret Service Chief J. J. Rowley—the first four people to handle the bullet found on the stretcher—could later identify CE-399 as that bullet, leaving open the possibility that another bullet was originally found and that CE-399, a ballistic match to CE-139, was substituted to implicate Lee Harvey Oswald. This would have been possible, since many hours passed before the proper chain of possession was established (CE-2011).

But you fail to backup your statement, “We also know that the bullets were not planted, because fragments from JFK’s brain and Connally’s wrist matched the larger fragments chemically,” with any available supporting source references concerning this issue. CE-567 and CE-569: two bullet fragments, one from the front of a bullet, the other from the rear of a bullet. They were supposedly found, on the night of 22–23 November 1963, inside the President’s limousine while it was being searched at the White House Garage. Secret Service agents, allegedly, found both of these fragments on the floor, near the front seat. Each fragment was ballistically linked to CE-139, the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. However, I find

no source references concerning this evidence anywhere that they could be linked, in any fashion, to any of the other fragments removed from either victim, nor could they be scientifically linked to either victim. Please list official source references for me to review concerning this issue.

So, as can be seen, there is *no supporting testimony*, and *no physical evidence*, to support the *key* Warren Commission Report conclusion that:

All the evidence indicated that the bullet found on the Governor's stretcher could have caused all the wounds.

I have spent some time browsing your website, Dr. Rahn, and I couldn't help but notice that at the bottom of your first page, you state:

My JFK course at the University of Rhode Island takes this academic approach. Each year it enlightens a significant fraction of the students who take it, often with striking results. That is also the goal of this web site. Enlightenment through proper academic procedures. I welcome any and all reactions from readers, and will post them for all to see.

When I went to view your "Reactions from Readers" link, I was disappointed to see the most recent exchange of messages was posted from 30 August 2000—almost a year ago [in 2001]—and thought I would suggest that you update your link to that page, perhaps starting with our exchange. I think visitors to that particular link on your site would enjoy seeing that debates over differences of opinions (and reaching critical-thinking conclusions) on issues surrounding this case can be discussed in a courteous and respectful manner, even between a renowned university professor and a simple Alaskan wilderness guide. Let them judge for themselves which one of us is displaying true critical thinking over the issues being debated.

Thank you for taking time to debate these issues with me.

Sincerely,
Chris Dolmar

Rahn's last reply, 25 August 2001, 8:00 pm:

Chris,

Please understand that I didn't let "Replies from Readers" go because I wanted to. It was a casualty of general workload, including preparing the big monograph on neutron activation analysis, which was a huge undertaking but very important to the JFK case.

Also, the kinds of messages you write, with many questions and weak premises, take hours to answer properly. I seldom have that amount of time to spare these days.

Lastly, if you are implying that I am not thinking critically in my class and my writings, I am out of this discussion immediately. I will discuss things, but I will not be put under the gun.

Ken Rahn

And my most recent reply to Rahn, 28 August 2001, 5:03 am:

Good Morning Mr. Rahn,

I just finished reading your reply to my last email to you. I did not mean to put you on the defensive, and had thought that according to your world wide website that you defined your course analysis of the JFK as an objective one.

Oh yes, Dr. Rahn, I have spent a considerable amount of my leisure time examining your site, and have thus directed my own *very objective* queries to you regarding *the evidence* in a courteous, professional manner, as you might review throughout our correspondences.

Your last response does you no justice as far as confronting the issues I brought forth, backed up with solid, supporting Warren Commission and/or House Select Committee on Assassinations testimony and evidence. "Weak premises"? Are you accusing me of providing false source references to you concerning the issues we have been debating? Please elaborate and don't try to tell me it would take hours, as I drafted my email to you in less than one hour, referencing everything with which you've confronted me concerning the issues I've brought forth to you with Warren Commission and/or House Select Committee on Assassinations recorded testimony and evidence.

In most of my emails I have not asked questions but simply provided the *facts*. If I asked you for source references regarding your unsupported replying statements to me, you should have been able to reference them, and cut and paste them into your reply emails to me in a matter of minutes. After all, you're an acknowledged expert on the case and happen to have the *enormous responsibility* of providing *an objective* presentation of the assassination events to numerous generations of our impressionable youth, some of whom may one day become leaders in various fields in our country.

I waded through your very dated "Reactions From Readers" page and enjoyed it very much. But, am I willing to bet (and, to be honest with you, I'm not a wagering man) that *our correspondences* will never see the light of day on any "Reactions From Readers" page on your website because you *cannot* (and *so far refuse*) to refute *any* of the issues I have confronted you with in an *objective* way that would do justice to your website statement:

I can state with surety, and will demonstrate in the coming months, that anyone in command of the core physical data, and the principles of critical thinking, can circumscribe the right answer to the assassination in a matter of minutes.

But you told me it would take *hours* to answer my questions! I didn't really pose many questions to you, *just facts*, that you, for one reason or another, *refuse* to refute. *Why?*

For example (from our last correspondence):

But you fail to backup your statement: "We also know that the bullets were not planted, because fragments from JFK's brain and Connally's wrist matched the larger fragments, chemically," with any available supporting source references concerning this issue.

Is this an issue you can't support with any verifiable source references? C'mon Dr. Rahn, you're an educator of this case—*back it up, or don't tell me my "premises" are "weak"*.

When you take on the responsibility of educating college students (*who are paying you to be objective*), then at least assume that responsibility, *objectively*, as you *claim* you are. Your defensive attitude reeks of an official who thinks his "credentials" automatically enable him to preach his "gospels" in a manner that is unquestionable.

Please, *objectively*, respond to my very *accurate* source references concerning the *few* issues we have debated, in a professional manner, so that I may ponder *all* my "weak premises".

Thank you for taking time to consider my statements.

Sincerely,
Chris Dolmar

I thought this worth sharing to reveal how some of our "celebrated" university professors, who are entrusted with educating our youth, show their true colors when confronted by individuals who happen to be able to debate them on their own terms.

In Dr. Rahn's case, I expect the only reply I will ever hear from him, after my last correspondence to him, will be the deafening sound of silence. And, I should hope his silence speaks volumes to you all, and especially to any youths who might happen to take the time to read through this article.

[*Editor's note:* Dolmar's final email to Rahn, of 28 August 2001, 5:35 am, contains many useful references for further reading. Most of these references were originally published in "The Gun That Didn't Smoke" (*Assassination Research*, Vol. 1 No. 2) Copyright © 1994, 1997 by Walter F. Graf and Richard R. Bartholomew.]

Dear Dr. Rahn,

I thought I would add a list of "objective" source references concerning various issues of this case for you to review. Although they are many and varied, as an objective historian of the case, they merit review.

Sources and Notes

Oswald: Michael Benson, *Who's Who in the JFK Assassination* (New York: Citadel Press, 1993), pp. 124, 329–352; John M. Newman, *Oswald and the CIA* (Carroll & Graf, 1995); Paul Brancato, *Coup D'etat*, illustrated card set (Forestville, California: Eclipse Enterprises, 1989), pp. 1, 7, 10.

Although we often assume that most of the American public initially accepted the lone gunman scenario, some of the following source references show that this was not necessarily the case.

Public Doubt: Paul B. Sheatsley and Jacob J. Feldman, *The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public*, National Opinion Research Center (Stanford University Press, 1965) (a large majority expressing doubt over Oswald's guilt).

For sources of public opinion for the period November 1963 through February 1977, see "Studies of Public Reactions," items 1673–1714, DeLloyd J. Guth and David R. Wrone, *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: A Comprehensive Historical and Legal Bibliography, 1963–1979* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 174–7, hereafter cited as "Guth and Wrone 174–7".

It's also interesting to note that on Sunday, 24 November 1963, soon after Oswald had been shot, Gordon McClendon, owner of Dallas radio station KLIF, reported the following from Cleveland's Municipal Stadium, where 40,000 spectators were attending the Dallas Cowboys–Cleveland Browns football game:

People seem to think that the Dallas Police Department really had the wrong man, or that Oswald was being held for want of a better suspect ... No one here that we've talked to—taxi drivers, hotel employees, the various people we've had an opportunity to be around since we arrived here yesterday afternoon—no one really thought that Oswald was the guilty party. (*The Fateful Hours: A Presentation of KLIF News in Dallas*, Capitol Records, 1964; reissued on audiotape by KLIF, 1993.)

For sources of public opinion just before and after the release of the Oliver Stone film *JFK* see: Kenneth Auchincloss, "Twisted History," *Newsweek* 23 December 1991, p. 46; Ted Gest and Joseph Shapiro, "JFK: The Untold Story of the Warren Commission," *U.S. News & World Report* 17 August 1992, p. 29; No "Credible" Evidence: Warren Commission Report (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964) p. 374, hereafter cited as R 374.

Official doubt: Chairman Warren: William M. Blair, "Warren Commission Will Ask Mrs. Oswald to Identify Rifle Used in the Kennedy Assassination," *New York Times* 5 February 1964, p. 19; Richard Bartholomew discussion with Clint Richmond, 5 March 1997.

Commissioners Russell, Cooper, and Boggs: Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies* (Senate Report 94-755, 94th Cong., 2nd sess., 1976, Final Report, Book V), p. 80, cited in Bernard Fensterwald, *Coincidence or Conspiracy* (New York: Zebra Books, 1977), pp.74–5 (hereafter cited as Fensterwald 74–5); Edward Jay Epstein, *Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth* (New York: Viking, 1966) pp. 149–150, (Bantam, 1966) p. 122; see also Fensterwald 86, 91, 96, 99.

Commissioner McCloy: *Hearings Before the House Select Committee on Assassinations*, Vol. XI (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), note 11 at p. 14, hereafter cited as 11 HH 14 n. 11; see also Fensterwald 86;

Griffin statements: Charles J. Sanders and Mark S. Zaid, "The Declassification of Dealey Plaza: After Thirty Years, A New Disclosure Law At Last May Help To Clarify the Facts of the Kennedy Assassination," *South Texas Law Review* Vol. 34:407, October 1993; later published in "The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992" (ARCA), *The Fourth Decade*, Spe-

cial Edition, 1994, pp. 411–2 n. 8; hereafter cited as Sanders and Zaid 411–2 n. 8.

President Johnson: Walter Cronkite interview, CBS News, broadcast on 25 April 1975 (President Johnson’s doubt); see also Fensterwald 76, 124.

FBI policy: Warren Commission Hearings and Evidence (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964, v. V) p. 99, cited hereafter as 5H 99 (Hoover’s policy); see also Sanders and Zaid, p. 412 n. 11.

Evidence problems: Robert Sam Anson, *They’ve Killed the President!* (New York: Bantam, 1975) p. 356, hereafter cited as Anson 356; Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993) pp. 58, 60–1, 69, hereafter cited as Scott 58, 60–1, 69; Walter F. Graf and Richard R. Bartholomew, “The Gun that Didn’t Smoke”, *Fair Play Magazine*, Issue 19 (November–December 1997); Karen Gullo, “No JFK Shirt Material on Bullets,” *Associated Press*, 21 January 2000 (AP-NY-01-21-00 1120EST, www.wire-ap.org); Joe Backes, “Backes Responds To NARA’s Blundered Test Report, and Gullo’s AP piece” (self-published critique, 21 January 2000, 19:32:42 EST); Charles E. O’Hara, *Fundamentals of Criminal Investigation* (Springfield, Illinois: Thomas Books, 1956, 1970, 2nd ed., 2nd printing) pp. 5–6, 30, 67, 69, 80, 197, 199, 438, 450, 493, 562, 575, 681, 684–5, 687, hereafter cited as O’Hara with page number(s). As if speaking to the crime-scene investigators of the JFK assassination, O’Hara wrote the following in a brief preface to his second edition:

On review, however, it would appear that insufficient attention had been given to the role of the investigator in establishing the innocence of persons falsely accused. It was thought that this aspect of investigation was too obvious to stress; that the continued insistence on objectivity and professionalism in the investigator’s conduct should meet this requirement. After all, the process of establishing innocence is hardly separable from the task of detecting the guilty. One does not, that is to say, prove guilt by the method of exhaustion (O’Hara vii).

See also: Walt Brown, Ph.D., *The People v. Lee Harvey Oswald* (Carroll & Graf, 1994).

Two Oswalds: John Armstrong, *Harvey and Lee* (self-published); Deb Riechmann, “Tape: Call on JFK wasn’t Oswald,” *Associated Press*, 21 November 1999, 12:46 EST; Joe Nick Patoski, “The Two Oswalds,” *Texas Monthly magazine*, November 1998, pp. 135, 160.

Conflicting single bullet theories: Warren Commission: Sanders and Zaid, 410–2 n. 8; **House Committee:** Guth and Wrone xxvii–xxx; **American Bar Association:** Gerald Posner, *Case Closed* (New York: Random House, 1993) p. 317, 326–35, 474, 477, 478–9, hereafter cited as Posner with page number(s). (Posner’s theory is taken from the American Bar Association Mock Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald prosecution single bullet theory. It was presented uncritically and without credit to the ABA by Posner. The entire, unabridged transcript of the 1992 American Bar Association’s two-day mock trial presentation, “The United States v. Lee Harvey Oswald”, can be found in *American Jurisprudence Trials Volume 56*, published by Lawyers Cooperative Publishing).

JFK and Vietnam: L. Fletcher Prouty, *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1992); John M. New-

man, *JFK and Vietnam: Deception, Intrigue and the Struggle for Power* (New York, NY, 1992).

CIA-oil industry and Wall Street connections: Darwin Payne, *Initiative in Energy: Dresser Industries, Inc. 1880–1978* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), Appendix C; Donald Gibson, *Battling Wall Street: The Kennedy Presidency* (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1994).

The Assassination and Academic History: Michael L. Kurtz (is a Professor of History at Southeastern Louisiana University and has taught a course on the assassination for several decades), *Crime of the Century: The Kennedy Assassination from a Historian's Perspective* (University of Tennessee Press, 1993, 2nd ed.); Kenneth A. Rahn, "The Academic JFK Assassination Website," karws.gso.uri.edu/JFK/JFK.html, which supports the University of Rhode Island's Political Science course "The JFK Assassination".

The Assassination in the Media: [*Editor's Note:* Chris Dolmar's acknowledgment of work of Dr. George Michael Evica has been temporarily removed, pending correction by the author.]

Miscellaneous assassination-related topic sources: David G. Armstrong, "Where Was George?" *Austin Chronicle*, 28 February 1992, pp. 20–2; Richard Bartholomew, "Possible Discovery of an Automobile Used in the JFK Conspiracy," self-published manuscript (1993), p. 63; *Fair Play Magazine*, Issue 17, (July–August 1997); **Malcolm Wallace Fingerprint:** John Kelin, "JFK Breakthrough?" *Fair Play Magazine*, Issue 23 (July–August 1999); "A. Nathan Darby's Affidavit," *Fair Play Magazine*, Issue 24 (September–October 1999); Barr McClellan, "Mac Wallace Update: Statement Regarding Print Evidence," *Fair Play Magazine*, Issue 28, (May–June 1999).

And, finally, a couple of notes to conclude with:

Let's consider that a bullet fired from the sixth floor window of Texas School Book Depository entered the back of JFK's head and killed him. The building in question was horizontally located to the President's rear, while the sixth floor of that building was considerably vertically above the President's head. Therefore, any such bullet must have entered the President's head from above and behind. That much is indisputable. No photographs of the President's injuries were published at the time, but the Warren Commission Report (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964) did provide drawings (which can also be found in James H. Fetzer, Ph.D., editor, *Assassination Science: Experts Speak Out on the Death of JFK* (Catfeet Press, 1998), p. 38. Since these illustrations are published in the Warren Report, we must assume they are official and accurate portrayals of the President's injuries. The drawings of the head wound do, therefore, appear to show a trajectory from above and behind, as the official account requires. In what I consider to be a solid study of the most basic evidence in his case by Stewart Galanor for his work *Cover-Up* (Kestrel Books, 1998), he has juxtaposed the official Warren Commission drawing with frame 312 of the Zapruder film (which the Warren Commission itself regarded as the instant before the fatal head shot incident to frame 313), with the following result: When the images of the Warren Commission head wound drawing and Zapruder frame 312 are super-imposed over each, and the President's head is properly positioned, the Warren Commission's own drawing displays an upward, rather than downward trajectory. If the official Warren Commission drawing of the injury to the head is correct, then the conjecture that the President's head wound was

sustained from a hit from above and behind cannot be true. The Zapruder film itself confirms this.

Let's also consider that the bullets that hit JFK and John Connally were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald using a high-powered rifle, which the Warren Commission also identified as a 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano. The President's death certifies, The Warren Report, articles published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, as well as other sources, state that the President was killed by wounds inflicted by high velocity missiles. (Some of these articles are reprinted in Fetzer's *Assassination Science*). The Mannlicher-Carcano is the only weapon that Lee Harvey Oswald is alleged to have used to kill the President, but the Mannlicher-Carcano is not a high-velocity weapon:

Its muzzle velocity of approximately 2000 feet per second indicates that it qualifies as a medium to low velocity weapon.

This issue is especially noteworthy, because the extensive and severe damage sustained by JFK's skull and brain could not possibly have been inflicted by a weapon of this kind.

The ammunition that Lee Harvey Oswald is alleged to have used was standard full metal-jacketed military ammunition, one round which is supposed to have been found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital, a photograph of which appears as CE-399. This kind of ammunition conforms to Geneva Convention standards for humane conduct of warfare and is not intended to maim but pass through the body leaving a fairly clean, small wound, as far as bullet wounds go. In other words, this type of ammo does not explode on impact. If you examine the lateral cranial X-ray of the President's head, it reveals an obvious and definitive pepper-like display pattern of metallic debris which classically exhibits the effects of the impact of an exploding bullet, which could not have been caused by ammunition of the kind Lee Harvey Oswald was alleged to have used.

The axis of the debris in the abovementioned X-ray also appears to be consistent with a shot entering the area of the right temple rather than the back of the head. Studies of this issue are found in Joseph N. Riley, Ph.D., "The Head Wounds of John F. Kennedy: One Bullet Cannot Account for the Injuries," *The Third Decade* (March 1993) pp. 1-15; and in the research of David W. Mantik, M.D., Ph.D., in James Fetzer's *Assassination Science*, in his comments on the recent deposition of James J. Humes, M.D., for the ARRB (Appendix G), and in his present study of the medical evidence. The major fatal trauma the President endured had to have been inflicted by one or more high velocity weapons.

Any comments?

Sincerely,
Chris Dolmar