THERE IS NO MAGIC BULLET

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Thanks in large part to the dramatic presentation Kevin Costner gave in Oliver Stone's JFK (1991), and many false images reprinted by conspiracists before and after that film, it is common for people to believe that President Kennedy and Governor Connally could not have been struck by the same bullet. According to the conspiracists, the "magic bullet" theory put forth by the Warren Commission is an obvious lie. In reality, the complete opposite is true.

WHAT THE CONSPIRACISTS SAY

Conspiracists depict Governor Connally seated directly in front of President Kennedy, with both men facing forward. They also draw the path of the bullet as if it originated from President Kennedy's far right. Then they ask, "How could a bullet turn right, then left, in midair, between the President and the Governor?" Knowing that a bullet cannot do this, they insist that you agree with them: "The Warren Commission's single bullet (aka magic bullet) theory is impossible and there must have been a second gunman."

The Warren Commission's single bullet theory, however, was based on the facts of the case, which bear little resemblance to this phony misrepresentation. To begin with, Connally was not seated directly in front of Kennedy; he was on a pull down jump seat, set in from the side of the car and lower than the back seat. If Connally was seating directly in front of Kennedy, he would have been uncomfortably crammed up against the side of the vehicle, with no room for his leg. In other words, it's impossible.
As all the footage from that day shows, Connally was comfortably seated, set in from the side of the car, not tight up against the side with his arm comfortably resting outside, as Kennedy was.
But that is only the beginning of the conspiracists' deception. The bullet did not come from the President's far right, it almost directly behind him and only slightly to the right. Look at the layout of Dealey Plaza. Elm Street curves away from the former School Book Depository and slopes downhill.

Now consider the fact that Connally was turned in his seat at the time of the second shot. He had heard the first shot, which missed both men, and he was trying to see where the sound came from when he was hit.
What you get when you put the actual facts together is a straight line from Oswald's rifle on the sixth floor, through Kennedy's upper back and out his throat, then into Connally's back and through his body.

For the conspiracists' phony drawings and reenactments to have any ring of truth, the shot that struck Kennedy would need to have been fired from a location in the building where no witnesses claimed to have seen a gunman that day and there was no evidence of a sniper's nest found.
But there is another problem for conspiracists (reality keeps getting in their way). The entry wound on Connally's back and the exit wound on his chest were both ovals, rather than round. This is because the bullet that struck him was rolling, end over end, through the air, the way a bullet does after it has already passed through human flesh. If Connally had been hit by a different bullet than the one that passed through Kennedy, there would be no good explanation for the oval wounds Connally received, unless you want to believe that this second gun malfunctioned in a very odd manner that just happened to resemble the path of a bullet after it passes through a human being.
When the actual facts of the case (the layout of the plaza and the car, the position of the victims and the shooter, the types of wounds) are considered together, there is no reasonable conclusion to reach other than the one The Warren Commission reached; a single bullet, traveling in a straight line, struck both men. There was no other place for a bullet traveling through Kennedy to go than into Connally, and there is nothing "magical" about any of this. The only people who have ever proposed a ridiculous, "magic bullet theory," are the conspiracists, who made it up in order to falsely ridicule the Warren Common in the minds of people who do not know what the Commission actually found or said.

In a last ditch effort to save a little face, conspiracists will insist that a bullet could not have passed through all that flesh and bone and still be mostly intact (or "pristine," as they typically mischaracterize it). Here too, however, they are ignoring the contextual facts. 1) No bones were hit in Kennedy. A full X-ray was done of his body when they first thought a bullet had been left in him. 2) Oswald's rifle - which was serviceable and not a piece of junk, as many pretend - was an Italian made military weapon. Military rifles throughout the world adhere to the Geneva Conventions, which try to reduce the inhumanity of war by applying gentlemanly rules to armed conflict. You may find this silly, but it doesn't change the fact that these rules exist. Military rifles, when not inflicting a fatal shot (like the one to the President's head), are designed to wound and disable as many of the enemy as possible, rather than doing the greatest possible damage and inflicting the highest amount of deaths possible. Military rifles accomplish this by using harder bullets, full metal jackets, which cut right through you and stay intact far better than the soft bullets that most people are more familiar with.

Warren Commission Exhibit CE399, the bullet found at Parkland Hospital, after it fell out of Connelly's leg is normally shown by conspiracists only in the side view, to exaggerate its "pristine" condition. When you look at the butt view, you can see that it has been turned from a circle into an oval, as you would expect from a bullet that did most of its damage while tumbling end over end. What is true for the nonmagical "magic bullet" is true for so many points the conspiracists raise. Time and again the actual evidence is consisted with what the Warren Commission found and reported, but it is deliberately distorted by the theorists/researchers.

WHY LIE?

Casual believers in a conspiracy can be forgiven for not looking harder at the evidence and only listening to one side of the debate, but the conspiracy "experts," who claim to have spent years examining the case, are not making an honest mistake about the so-called magic bullet, or the many other things they have fabricated. Why do they insist on making up obvious lies and then accuse The Warren Commission of lying?
I could offer several speculations as to the conspiracists' motives, from money to ego to paranoia, but regardless of why they choose to distort reality like this, the pattern of distortions is what matters most. Every time you seriously examine a conspiracist's claim of "proof" about President Kennedy's Assassination, what you find are more lies and more reasons not to listen to them.

A RESPONSE TO MY CRITICS

Since first creating these graphics and presenting my case against the falsely named, "magic bullet," in text and on video, I have heard from several people online who jerk their knee and grab wildly for some reason to dismiss me. Their three main complaints have been:

1) Oliver Stone and his fellow conspiracy theorists didn't create the magic bullet, The Warren Commission did. If you have a problem with it then you have a problem with the official version, not with the conspiracy people who are just trying to get at the truth.

2) This is a straw man argument. Oliver Stone made a Hollywood movie, with a lot of dramatized elements in it, so he could entertain people and get them to watch it, you can't judge the serious conspiracy "researchers" based on your objections to Stone's film.

3) Your graphic that allegedly shows the position of Kennedy and Connally in the car is impossible. You have Connally's butt half way off the seat, practically in the middle of the car, and that's not where his was. You needed to put him there to make the Warren Commission's lie work.

Well, allow me to retort:

1) This is a pretty disingenuous complaint, made by people who have only skimmed over my arguments. The Warren Commission did not make up the "magic bullet." The Warren Commission looked at the available evidence and came to the simple, rational conclusion that a single bullet passed through both Kennedy and Connally. Conspiracists labeled this the "magic bullet theory" to denigrate it and make it seem silly. Conspiracists cannot deal with the actual evidence, which all points to a single shot hitting both Kennedy and Connally, so they mislabel and misrepresent what the Warren Commission actually said, then they respond to their own distortions and pretend they have disproved the Warren Commission. Robert Groden is probably the "researcher" who has done the most to popularize this particular lie and the distorted graphics that are commonly used to support it. I am not certain how long he has been using these images, or who made them, but I did see them in a 1989 printing of his book, High Treason: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
Notice how Groden even labels one of these as being, "According to Warren Commission," and he uses them alongside actual Warren Commission graphic and other images in his book, so that the line between which images are from what source is deliberately unclear. Groden was one of the advisers on Stone's JFK film, where these same phony images appear in the courtroom scene, as Jim Garrison (Kevin Costner) lays out the false version of The Warren Commission's findings that conspiracists consistently put forth as fact.

Notice also how Stone has the actors seated one in front of the other on a perfectly level surface (following the example of the phony graphics, rather than the actual facts). Sadly, this same nonsense is still being cited as fact to this day. On April 22, 2014 I grabbed the following screen shots from conspiracist sites, “The John F. Kennedy Assassination Homepage” and “22 November 1963: An Introduction to the JFK Assassination,” but I could find plenty of other examples.
2) Oliver Stone hired leading conspiracy "researchers" (like Robert Groden) as advisors on his film and paid them a good deal of money to give him their false version of events. Nothing that I have objected to in Stone's work came from a need to dramatize the story for a movie going audience. Each false item that he presented, and I rebutted, was taken from conspiracy books and films that came before JFK was made; books and films made by and supported by the conspiracist community. I am not replying to a straw man, which is what the conspiracist do when they speak of a "magic bullet;" I am replying to the actual claims made by conspiracists, throughout the conspiracy theorist community.

3) This objection begins with a reasonable, though nitpicky point, and then becomes irrational. I fully admit that my graphics are not perfect. I do not have the resources to block off Dealey Plaza and do what the Warren Commission did, measuring the car from every possible angle to line it up with the film footage taken of the assassination and using stand in occupants for Kennedy and Connally. I made a couple rough, imperfect, but reasonable graphics (which were slight modifications of previous graphics made by others) to show that the position of Kennedy and Connally relevant to the Sniper's Nest can easily form a straight line. I do not believe that Connally's butt is half way off the seat in my original graphic but I have made a new one that places him directly in the middle of the seat. I then only needed to move the car's position slightly, the equivalent of a few inches, to maintain the straight line from Oswald's rifle, through Kennedy, and on through Connally.
There was nothing false about the original graphics I made, these ones are simply a little better, and the facts The Warren Commission found were not a lie. The same cannot be said of the disingenuous graphics and deliberate misrepresentations presented by conspiracists, who want to say that it would have taken a "magic bullet" to hit both Kennedy and Connally. The conspiracist's placement of Connally, directly in front of Kennedy, with the bullet coming in from Kennedy's extreme right, cannot be reconciled with the actual facts no matter where you place the car on Elm Street. Nevertheless, conspiracists continue to use these false images and made up "facts" to support their unsupportable case, while complaining when people like me fail to do anything less than a perfect representation of the evidence.