The Case for a Bunched Jacket

Part Two

[Readers please note: the web page is highly graphics intensive, and will require a while to load. It's worth the wait.]

4. HSCA

The House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) concluded that John Kennedy's back wound was at, or slightly above, the level of the throat wound. The HSCA also found that Kennedy and Connally were hit by the same bullet at Zapruder film frame 190 (Z-190). That finding created a problem for the HSCA because a flat (horizontal) trajectory through Kennedy could not have come from the TSBD sixth floor window and continued on to wound Governor Connally. That trajectory could not work even if the path of the bullet was deflected. Even if the bullet struck Kennedy that low on the back and was deflected upward to meet the exit wound at the lower neck, the bullet would have to change course in mid-air to arrive at Connally's back wound, an obvious impossibility.

To reconcile the differing findings of fact, the HSCA was forced to misrepresent Kennedy's posture at the time he was wounded. Assuming, arguendo, that the HSCA was correct about a Z-190 back wound, and that that bullet transited Kennedy's body through the neck on a flat horizontal plane, Kennedy would have to have been leaning significantly forward to allow the bullet to strike Connally. Even a cursory examination of the relevant photographic evidence reveals that not to be the case. The following, JFK Exhibit F-46, is the HSCA version of the JFK posture necessitated by their disparate findings.

Compare the HSCA's version of JFK's posture to that evidenced in the Croft photograph.

Croft was taken 29 Z-frames, or 1.58 seconds, before Z-190. JFK's posture in the Croft photograph does not resemble the HSCA version. Did JFK radically change his posture between Z-161 and Z-190? No. JFK did nothing more between those frames than rotate his head to the right and raise his forearm to wave. Even a cursory viewing of the Z-Film proves this. More important, the autopsy photograph of the back wound, when compared to a profile photograph taken that day, reveals the HSCA's mistake. The following photographic comparison (revised from the original, which was not an accurate scaling attempt) has the autopsy photograph and the Love Field photograph scaled as closely as possible to one another. Unfortunately, the nature of the pose in the autopsy photograph versus that of the Love Field profile photograph precludes a 100% precise correlation.

The Love Field photograph on the left below shows the back wound entrance point at the same level as the throat wound per the HSCA Photographic Evidence Panel. While there are arguments both for and against the shirt slits having been caused by the passage of a bullet, my reading of the evidence leads me to believe they were indeed made by a bullet. It is for that reason that I used the holes in the shirt front as the starting point. If the HSCA Photographic Evidence Panel was correct that the wound pattern was anatomically level, the horizontal red line below would represent the inshoot location on the back.

Notice the substantial distance between the hairline and the entry in the back in the Love Field photograph. Now compare it to the hair-to-inshoot distance in the autopsy photograph, which shows it to be much closer to the hairline. Were the back wound level with the hole in the throat, the hair-to-inshoot distance would appear significantly greater than is the case. It follows, therefore, that the back wound is higher than the HSCA concluded and is higher than the throat wound. While Kennedy's head is tilted back toward the camera in the autopsy photo which would tend to decrease the apparent hair-to-inshoot distance somewhat, it does not appear to be sufficient to resolve the discrepancy. I leave it to the reader to decide for himself whether the two photographs have been scaled closely enough for a valid comparison to be drawn. I also leave it to the reader to decide for himself whether the hair-to-inshoot distance on the profile photograph is greater than the distance in the autopsy photograph. Imagine in your mind's eye how much the autopsy photograph would have to be enlarged such that its hair-to-inshoot distance would match the profile version. It
would be enormous, and clearly over scaled. It is for the above reason (and others) that I believe the HSCA placed the back wound too low. If my analysis is correct, the HSCA Photographic Evidence Panel's wound-pattern conclusion is not correct. The back wound would be higher than the throat wound.

5. The holes in the back of JFK's shirt and jacket are indeed too low to allow a bullet fired from the "sniper's nest" to emerge from Kennedy's throat and cause Governor Connally's back wound. The holes have been measured by the FBI, the Clark Panel (CP), and the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). The measurements vary slightly, but are close enough to determine that the same missile made the respective holes in the shirt and jacket. The locations determined are as follows:

**Distance downward from jacket collar to hole:**
- FBI: 13.75 cm.
- CP: 12 cm.
- HSCA: 13.5 cm.

**Distance to the right of jacket midline:**
- FBI: 4.5 cm.
- CP: 5 cm.
- HSCA: 5 cm.

**Distance downward from shirt collar to hole:**
- FBI: 14.7 cm.
- CP: 14 cm.
- HSCA: 14 cm.

**Distance to the right of shirt midline:**
- FBI: 2.9 cm.
- CP: 2.5 cm.
- HSCA: 2.5 cm.

Note that the only consensus between the sources in the above table is the shirt hole measurements as described by the Clark Panel and the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The measurements do show, however, that the jacket and shirt holes align well enough that there can be no question but that the same missile made them. At one point in time those two holes were in exact alignment. In order for the holes to align precisely, one or both garments must have been slightly askew.

If those bullet hole locations are taken at face value, the SBT fails. So the question now becomes: "What was the orientation of JFK's clothing at the time the back wound was inflicted?" That question leads us to source number 6, the photographs.

I would like to make one point before I address the photographic record, a record that is ripe with photographs and films of John Kennedy's jacket, yet shows precious little of his shirt, and nothing of the back of the shirt which concerns us here. In regard to the photographic record and the shirt back, it is inappropriate to speculate about that which cannot be seen. Yet, the issue must be dealt with in some fashion. Because the holes in the shirt and jacket align with one another, and if the jacket was flush and in the normal position when the shot struck, then the shirt must also have been flush and in the normal position. Conversely, because the holes align, if the jacket was elevated when the shot struck, the shirt must also have been elevated. That logic serves to conjoin the discussion about the photographic record of the shirt and the coat for the purpose of this essay.

6. The motorcade photographs show JFK seated in the limousine against the far right side of the rear seat. They also show that from the start of the motorcade, JFK perched his right arm on the side of the limousine, taking it down only occasionally, and for brief periods of time. This arm posture relieved Kennedy of the burden of suspending his arm while waving during the long motorcade. The result was that JFK's elbow was raised nearly to the same level as his shoulder.

JFK maintained this general posture during the entire ride through Dallas. It is this very posture which raised the back of his jacket up. The following photographic compilation amply demonstrates this point.
I have duplicated the effect this posture has on a suit jacket. Actually, the effect duplicated itself. It is this posture which precluded the possibility of JFK's jacket riding in the normal position, as the photographs demonstrate.

The most important photographs relating the position of JFK's jacket are those taken on Elm St. immediately before or during the shooting. These photographs, when combined with a comparison of their respective Zapruder film frames, and the Zapruder film as a whole, offer proof of the orientation of the President's clothing at the time of his assassination.

I shall discuss the relevant Elm St. photographs in the chronological sequence in which they were taken.

Go to Part Three of Essay