

FORGIVE MY GRIEF

VOL. II

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"I saw how frail all human glory is when I looked at Mrs. Kennedy sitting alone in the hallway of Parkland Hospital just outside Trauma Room 1. She looked so pitiful, like a cornered little rabbit." Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez described a scene in Parkland Hospital as we had breakfast at the

Saint Anthony Hotel in San Antonio on December 30, 1966.

I had asked for an appointment with Congressman Gonzalez due to recent developments concerning the clothing of Governor John B. Connally which make it important to review the sleazy methods used by the Warren Commission.

The Warren Report states, on page 85; **"Additional information regarding the source and nature of the injuries was obtained by expert examination of the clothes worn by the two men, particularly those worn by President Kennedy . . ."**

Except that the clothing in question was that worn by Governor Connally on that fateful day, Robert A. Frazier could deduce very little from the clothing—for a very good reason. The clothing had been destroyed as evidence by cleaning and pressing of the garments. Frazier, Special Agent for the FBI assigned to the testing laboratory, is being questioned by Arlen Specter.

SPECTER. I now hand you what purports to be the Governor's coat, and may the record show that has been heretofore marked as Commission Exhibit No. 683?

(At this point the Chairman left the hearing room.)

DULLES. (presiding) The record may so show.

SPECTER. Have you had an opportunity heretofore to examine that coat?

FRAZIER. Yes I have.

SPECTER. What did your examination reveal

with respect to the back side of the coat?

FRAZIER. There was found on the coat by me when I first examined it, near the right sleeve $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches from the seam where the sleeve attaches to the coat, and $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches to the right of the midline when you view the back of the coat, a hole which

is elongated in a horizontal direction to the length of approximately five-eighths of an inch, and which had an approximate one-quarter inch height.

SPECTER. Were you able to determine from your examination of the Governor's clothing whether or not they had been cleaned and pressed prior to the time you saw them?

FRAZIER. Yes; they had.

SPECTER. Is that different from or the same as the condition of the President's clothing which you have just described this morning?

FRAZIER. It is different in that the President's clothing had not been cleaned. It had only been dried. The blood was dried. However, the Governor's garments had been cleaned and pressed.

SPECTER. Had the President's clothing been pressed then?

FRAZIER. No, sir.

Some testimony omitted her. Questioning continues on the Governor's clothing.

FRAZIER. On the hole on the back of the coat although it had the general appearance and could have been a bullet hole, possibly because of the cleaning and pressing of the garment, I cannot state that it actually is a bullet hole nor the direction of the path of the bullet, if it were a bullet hole.

SPECTER. Is the nature of the opening consistent with being a bullet hole?

FRAZIER. Yes, sir; it is.

SPECTER. And is it consistent with a bullet hole caused by a missile traveling from the back to the front of the wearer of the garment?

FRAZIER. I could not determine that.

SPECTER. You couldn't determine that it was, but could it have been?

FRAZIER. It could have been, either way.

Some testimony omitted.

SPECTER. Referring now to the front side of the Governor's shirt, what, if anything, did you observe with respect to a tear or a hole thereon, as

to the body of the shirt?

Frazier here described the holes in the shirt.

SPECTER. Had the garment been cleaned and pressed, Mr. Frazier, prior to the time you examined it?

FRAZIER. Yes, sir.

SPECTER. Were there sufficient characteristics then remaining on the hole on the front side to enable you to formulate an opinion as to the cause of the hole?

FRAZIER. No, sir.

The Commission did not ask a single question of Governor or Mrs. Connally as to how or why the Governor's clothing got in the cleaned and pressed condition. This is destruction of very valuable evidence.

An aide to Vice President Johnson, Cliff Carter, seems to have signed for the Governor's clothing at Parkland according to the Warren Report, but Carter was not called as a witness. Carter's deposition makes no reference concerning the clothing.

In Vol. VI of the testimony, Parkland Hospital nurse, Miss Ruth Standridge testified:

SPECTER. You went back and got his clothes.

MISS STANDRIDGE. Yes.

SPECTER. What did you do with those clothes?

MISS STANDRIDGE. I asked the administrator who should I give them to, and they told me to give them to Governor Connally's party and they were in the minor medicine section and I went out there and there were two gentlemen out there and I asked them who I wanted to see --- I wanted to see somebody in Governor Connally's party, and they opened the door and they asked for somebody, and he said he was --- he identified himself as

Cliff Carter.

SPECTER. Did you give him the clothing?

MISS STANDRIDGE. Yes.

SPECTER. Do you know what he did with it?

MISS STANDRIDGE. No.

SPECTER. Have you heard what he did with it?

MISS STANDRIDGE. I've heard that it got lost and they found it in Representative Gonzales office

in a closet.

This is where things stood with regard to the condition of Connally's clothing until the LIFE MAGAZINE issue of November 25, 1966 stating a case for "A Matter of Reasonable Doubt." Life stated in part:

The Governor and his wife made only one appearance before the Warren Commission. He was questioned less than an hour, and she for approximately five minutes. "As a matter of fact," says Mrs. Connally, "it was almost two months before any of the investigators showed any interest in examining John's clothing. When he went into surgery they gave me his tie, trousers and socks in a paper bag. We finally located John's shirt and suit coat, which we were concerned about because of the wallet and personal papers in his breast pocket, in Congressman Henry Gonzales (sic) clothes closet in Washington . . ."

Congressman Gonzalez said he signed for the clothing from the Parkland Hospital nurse at the request of Cliff Carter, an aide to Lyndon Johnson.

Gonzalez said he tried to give the clothing to several persons in Parkland, but was advised that he should hold on to them. Gonzalez did hold the clothing and was half way back to Washington on Air Force II when he realized he was still holding the two brown paper bags. He took the bags to his office and placed them unopened in the closet. "I never did open the bags. I was surprised to learn there was a coat in either of the bags."

"I started calling people trying to get someone to come and get the bags of personal effects. Everyone advised me to hold on to them." To refresh his memory here, Congressman Gonzalez called a staff member, and related this story after the telephone conversation:

"One weekend while I was back in Texas, Cliff Carter, then one of President Johnson's White House staff called my office in Washington. Carter told the secretary that he was sending over two Secret Service Men to pick up the Governor's things." The men did not sign for the two brown paper bags.

"I did not clean and press the things in the bags. I never once opened the bags, I am not built that

way," was Congressman Gonzalez parting comment.

This leaves it up to Cliff Carter or to the Secret Service. Neither of them have been asked, according to the record, if they are the parties who had the clothing cleaned and pressed.

No one asked, but Mrs. Connally volunteered in the LIFE article: ". . . After about seven weeks I took John's shirt . . . it was all smeared with his flesh and blood, and dipped it in cold water several times to try and preserve it. Someone finally came to pick up his clothes. I think the Commission said his shirt was useless as evidence because it has been 'laundered.' But I never laundered it, I just soaked it in cold water."

Who destroyed this valuable evidence? Connally's coat might have given the location of the rifle from which the shots came, had anyone really cared to find out. **END**