

New Mystery in JFK Assassination: What Happened to Dr. Perry's Tapes?

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Whatever happened to the many film, video and audio tape records made of the nationwide broadcast debut of Dr. Malcolm Perry? CBS News, among others, would surely like to know.

Dr. Perry was one of the two main surgeons who operated on President John F. Kennedy after he was shot in Dallas. Perry was filmed and taped extensively at a press conference held at Parkland Memorial Hospital when attempts to save the President's life had failed. During that conference Perry reportedly stated that the throat wound suffered by Kennedy was an entrance wound—a statement in sharp contrast to the findings of the Warren Commission Report on the assassination.

Preparing its three-hour "CBS News Inquiry: The Warren Report," scheduled for the 10 to 11 p.m. time periods June 25, 26 and 27, CBS News has scoured network archives and several local stations for either visual-audio or audio records of Perry's interview, but all traces of it seem to have vanished. Les Midgley, producer of the inquiry, says CBS archives (with more than 80 hours of footage on the assassination and its aftermath) contain a visual version of the interview sans sound (it seems technicians covering for CBS misplugged the sound equipment).

Midgley says CBS had figured on getting that interview from the network affiliate in Ft. Worth, but the footage disappeared from the station's library. And neither NBC or ABC can locate the interview in their libraries.

CBS News went so far as to ask Emile deAntonio, producer of Mark Lane's "Rush to Judgement" now running theatrically, for a copy of the interview (it was a somewhat far-fetched request, since, as reported some weeks ago in VARIETY, CBS had first invited deAntonio

ASSASSINATION LIBRARY

in to screen and buy footage from its assassination library and then refused his use of the bulk of it on the premise the web was doing its own show).

But deAntonio could only report that he had himself, in March of 1966, made a futile attempt to get the interview, spending 10 days in Dallas screening footage at tv stations and listening to tapes at radio stations to no returns. De Antonio told CBS the place to look for the footage is in the National Archives in Washington. It's his feeling that no station employee, no matter how lowly, could fail to realize that in handling the assassination footage he was dealing with "the raw material of history," and that it is preposterous that "the footage doesn't exist anywhere."

DeAntonio says that Dallas station reps told him that the FBI had been around screening footage and that agents borrowed segments "for examination."

Anyhow, neither deAntonio nor Midgley were successful in extended efforts to get Dr. Perry to submit to another interview (deAntonio was unable to get any of the medicos involved on film, and Midgley has only an interview with the doctor who operated on Gov. Connally).

DeAntonio says the only record available is a text of the interview from the N. Y. Times. Midgley says he was able to get a transcript of the Perry interview—and figures he was most lucky to get that.