

Vol. IV

Nellie Connally Lee Testimony

April 2nd  
1964

Mrs. CONNALLY. In fact the receptions had been, so good every place that I had showed much restraint by not mentioning something about it before.

I could resist no longer. When we got past this area I did turn to the President and said, "Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you."

Then I don't know how soon, it seems to me it was very soon, that I heard a noise, and not being an expert rifleman, I was not aware that it was a rifle. It was just a frightening noise, and it came from the right.

I turned over my right shoulder and looked back, and saw the President as he had both hands at his neck.

Mr. SPECTER. And you are indicating with your own hands, two hands crossing over gripping your own neck?

Mrs. CONNALLY. Yes; and it seemed to me there was--he made no utterance, no cry. I saw no blood, no anything. It was just sort of nothing, the expression on his face, and he just sort of slumped down.

Then very soon there was the second shot that hit John. As the first shot was hit, and I turned to look at the same time, I recall John saying, "Oh, no, no, no." Then there was a second shot, and it hit John, and as he recoiled to the right, just crumpled like a wounded animal to the right, he said, "My God, they are going to kill us all."

I never again---

Mr. DULLES. To the right was into your arms more or less?

Mrs. CONNALLY. No, he turned away from me. I was pretending that I was him. I never again looked in the back seat of the car after my husband was shot. My concern was for him, and I remember that he turned to the right and then just slumped down into the seat, so that I reached over to pull him toward me. X was trying to get him down and me down. The jump seats were not very roomy, so that there were reports that he slid into the seat of the car, which he did not; that he fell over into my lap, which he did not.

I just pulled him over into my arms because it would have been impossible to get us really both down with me sitting and me holding him. So that I looked out, I mean as he was in my arms, I put my head down over his head so that his head and my head were right together, and all I could see, too, were the people flashing by. I didn't look back any more. The third shot that I heard I felt, it felt like spent buckshot falling all over us, and then, of course, I too could see that it was the matter, brain tissue, or whatever, just human matter, all over the car and both of us.

I thought John had been killed, and then there was some imperceptible movement, just some little something that let me know that there was still some life, and that is when I started saying to him, "It's all right. Be still."

Now, I did hear the Secret Service man say, "Pull out of the motorcade. Take us to the nearest hospital," and then we took out very rapidly to the hospital.

Just before we got to Parkland, we made a right-hand turn, he must have been going very fast, because as he turned the weight of my husband's body almost toppled us both.

Mr. SPECTER How fast do you think he was going?

Mrs. CONNALLY. I don't know; very rapidly. The people I could see going by were just rushing. We were just rushing by very fast. We arrived at the hospital and sat there what seemed to me like an interminable time, and from what I know was just a few minutes, but the thoughts that went through my mind were how long must I sit here with this dying man in my arms while everybody is swarming over the President whom I felt very sure was dead, and just when I thought I could sit and wait no longer, John

just sort of heaved himself up. He did not rise up in the car, he just sort of heaved himself up, and

then collapsed down into the seat.

Mr. SPECTER. At that time you and Governor Connally were still on the jump seats of the car?

Mrs. CONNALLY. Yes, and they had not--the President was still--and Mrs. Kennedy were still in the back. I still had not ever looked back at the back seat after the second shot. I could hear, you know, hear them talking about how sad, and lamenting the fact that the President was in such poor shape and, of course, they didn't know whether he was--I guess they didn't know whether he was alive or dead.

Mr. SPECTER. Did President Kennedy say anything at all after the shooting?

Mrs. CONNALLY. He did not say anything. Mrs. Kennedy said, the first thing I recall her saying was, after the first shot, and I heard her say, "Jack, they have killed my husband," and then there was the second shot, and then after the third shot she said, "They have killed my husband. I have his brains in my hand," and she repeated that several times, and that was all the conversation.

Mr. SPECTER. From that point forward you say you had your eyes to the front so you did not have a chance----

Mrs. CONNALLY. Yes, because I had him, and I really didn't think about looking back anyway, but I could just see the car rushing along, and people and things rushing past us. I remember thinking what a terrible sight this must be to those people, to see these two shot-up men, and it was a terribly horrifying thing, and I think that is about as I remember it.

Mr. SPECTER. What happened then after you got to the hospital?

Mrs. CONNALLY. We got to the hospital and, like I said, John heaved himself over. They still could not seem to get Mrs. Kennedy or the President out of the back of the car, but someone scooped him up in their arms and put him on a stretcher. There were two stretchers there, and then they took him off immediately to the emergency room, and they ran down the hall with the stretcher, and I just ran along with them.

They took him into the emergency room, and right behind us came the President on a stretcher, and they took him and put him in a room to the right. There was much commotion and confusion. There were lots of what I assumed were Secret Service men rushing in with machine guns, I guess, or tommyguns. I am not real sure, they were big arms of some sort. There was no one there were lots of people across the hall. There was no one with me and, of course, my thoughts then were, I guess like any other woman, I wondered if all the doctors were in the room on the left, and they were not taking too good care of my husband on the right. I shouldn't have worried about that, should I?

I knew no one in the hospital and I was alone. Twice I got up and opened the door into the emergency room, and I could hear John and I could see him moving, and I knew then that he was still alive.

I guess that time was short, too. It seemed endless. Somebody rushed out, I thought it was a nurse, and handed me one cuff link. I later read that it was a lady doctor.

They took him out of there very soon up to surgery, and I just left with him and waited in an office. Do you know whose office I was in? It was where you came to me.

Dr. GREGORY. Dr. Jenkins' office.

Dr. SHAW. Yes. You were either in the anesthesia office or in the room that is part of the recovery room. Was it the same place where you later stayed, Mrs. Connally?

Mrs. CONNALLY. No.

Dr. GREGORY. I think it was back in Dr. Jenkins' office. That is where I believe I first saw you.

Mrs. CONNALLY. I believe that is right.

As soon as Dr. Shaw found that he had some encouraging news, that the wounds were not as extensive as he had thought they could be or might be, he sent that word to me from the operating room, and that was good news.

I then asked if I couldn't go see Mrs. Kennedy, and they told me that she had left the hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. Were you visited at the hospital by Mrs. Johnson?

Mr. SPECTER. At that time you and Governor Connally were still on the jump seats of the car?

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p. 149 - Again Mrs. Connally certain in her memory -  
Very short time between 1st & 2nd shot from  
between the 2nd & third. (p. 149)