

Wash. Star Sat 12-23-78

How Startling 4-Bullet JFK Tape Came

By Lance Gay

Washington Star Staff Writer

Sometime shortly after noon on the day President John F. Kennedy was shot, a Dallas motorcycle patrolman was assigned to the area around Dealey Plaza, apparently to direct traffic.

What that policeman did that day and an apparent malfunction of his police radio have resurfaced 15 years later to become the center of a new controversy over how many shots were fired at the president that day.

All other Dallas police units assigned to the presidential motorcade Nov. 22, 1963, were using a special channel of the Dallas Police radio. This officer, however, remained on the normal police radio frequency which was being used for routine matters.

At 12:28 p.m. that day, the radio mike on the motorcycle stuck open — a frequent occurrence with radio transmitters — and the normal police radio system began picking up sounds from the scene. But the sounds were only the roar of the officer's motorcycle engine and static.

At 12:30, the buzzing was broken by the sound of carrillon bells and a voice saying: "What happened up there. Go see what happened."

THE ROAR AND buzzing continues for another four minutes until the microphone becomes unstuck around 12:34.

Underneath that roar and static, sound technicians who have attempted to reconstruct what happened that day in Dallas, say they have found evidence that makes them "95 percent certain" that there were four, not three shots.

And, in the most startling of revelations, sound experts using sophisticated computer techniques to track acoustical echoes say they have traced the sound of one of those four shots to the fence behind the so-called grassy knoll.

That revelation has reopened the

case of the Kennedy assassination all over again.

The House Assassination Committee had been putting the final touches on its report on the Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations when the sound technicians reported their findings. But yesterday Committee Chairman Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, scheduled a hearing next week to explore the new findings.

IF THOSE SOUND reports are found valid, the committee could be on the verge of the first proof that Kennedy was shot at from two directions, and that there are thus strong grounds for suspecting a conspiracy.

Conspiracy theorists have long maintained that Kennedy was shot at from two or more directions that day in Dallas. They have contended that the Warren Commission ignored evidence given it and bent other evidence to conclude that only three shots were fired and all came from the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository building.

Some conspiracy theorists have also argued that the six minutes of buzzing on the Dallas police radio tape that day was caused by sabotage and linked to the assassination.

"That's how I got interested in the tape in the first place," said a Texas woman who spent more than two years transcribing the police radio tapes of that day and whose transcripts have been used by the House committee.

"We initially thought that the buzzing was electronically done, but now we accept that it was just a mike button stuck," said the woman, who asked not to be identified.

"You can't hear the shots on it — after I heard they found shots there I went back and listened and listened and listened and I couldn't pick them out."

The tape had been given to the Warren Commission as part of the evidence it collected, but the commission did nothing with it.

Harold Weisberg, the father of the Kennedy assassination conspiracists and the most persistent critic of the Warren Commission's activities yesterday maintained that the commission should have had sound tests done on the tape as they had done on others they received.

HE NOTED THAT THE commission did have scientific examinations done on another tape that turned out to be a hoax and he maintained the state of the art of sound science was good enough in those days to discern the reports of four shots on the tape.

Furthermore, Weisberg said the House committee is ignoring other physical evidence that Kennedy was shot from the front. He maintains that it was probably the third of the four shots that hit Kennedy from the front and passed through his neck above the collar.

An autopsy report maintains the bullet that hit Kennedy in the neck came from behind and says that bruising and burning on the entrance to the wound confirmed this. Weisberg maintains that the autopsy report was doctored to make it consistent with the assumption that all of the shots came from the back.

THE DISCOVERY OF the gunshot reports on the tape are the product of detailed acoustical research done by several persons.

Earlier this year, Dr. James Barger of the Cambridge, Mass., firm of Bolt, Beranek and Newman said he studied the six-minute buzz-

About

ing on the tape and concluded there was a 50-50 probability of four shots.

Barger said he was not sure and his firm then recommended that the tape be given to acoustical experts Mark Weiss and Ernest Aschkenasy of Queens College, New York to review Barger's findings.

Barger said the four-shot sequence started from a shot from the depository, was followed by a second 1.6 seconds later also from the depository area. A third shot, which seemed to come from around the grassy knoll, came 5.9 seconds later and a fourth shot from the Depository .5 seconds after that.

Weiss and Aschkenasy concentrated on the third shot, filtering out the noise further and plotting the echoes more precisely, using computers studies and the results from a reenactment of the shooting in Dallas last August.

THE TWO CONCLUDED "beyond a reasonable doubt" according to one report, that the third shot came from the grassy knoll. They were also able to predict the area it came from within about 10 feet.

Bolt, Beranek and Newman concurred and in a statement said that "it is therefore our view that there is a 95 percent likelihood that the sounds of four gunshots are present on the tape and that the third shot came from the direction of the so-called grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Tex."

But the new disclosures will not result in extending the life of the assassination committee past the Dec. 31 scheduled expiration date, Stokes said yesterday.