

Experts Say That Second Gunman Almost Certainly Shot at Kennedy

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 29 — Acoustics experts said today that tests showed "a probability of 95 percent or better" that a shot was fired from a grassy knoll in Dallas when President Kennedy was assassinated.

The findings would appear to contradict the conclusion of the Warren Commission in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald, shooting from a window of the Texas School Book Depository building, acted alone in assassinating the President on Nov. 22, 1963.

The testimony of Mark Weiss and Ernest Aschkenasy, professors at Queens College of the City University of New York, came as the House Select Committee on Assassinations prepared to end a \$5.8 million, two-year inquiry into circumstances surrounding the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The committee goes out of business Wednesday.

In evaluating the Weiss and Aschkenasy findings, the committee's staff concluded that while the new evidence strongly indicated a possible conspiracy and the presence of a second gunman on the grassy knoll, the shots that killed President Kennedy and injured Gov. John Connally of Texas were fired by Oswald. The shot from the knoll, the staff concluded, struck no one and did not strike the Kennedy limousine.

Recording From Motorcycle

The professors' public testimony paralleled reports published last week based on information obtained from committee sources about the Weiss-Aschkenasy analysis of a Dictabelt recording of sounds picked up by a microphone on a police motorcycle. That recording was compared with others made of shooting tests conducted in Dallas last summer.

The professors' findings were corroborated by Dr. James Barger, chief scientist and head of acoustics analysis for Bolt, Beranek and Newman of Cambridge, Mass., who conducted the series of shooting tests.

Dr. Barger had testified in September that there was only a 50-50 probability of a shot from the grassy knoll. But he said that the further analysis by the Queens College professors had convinced him that there was a probability of "95 percent or more" that a shot was fired from the knoll.

Committee photographic experts said in September that a special "enhancement" of a photograph of the Kennedy shooting showed a figure that might be a man near the corner of a wall on the grassy knoll.

Concern Over Findings

Committee members were clearly concerned by the new acoustical evidence, coming so late in the long inquiry. The evidence, said Representative Louis Stokes, the committee chairman, could have an enormous impact on history because it raises "a legal assumption of the possibility of a conspiracy."

The Ohio Democrat noted that the com-

mittee had "developed evidence of the outlines of a likely conspiracy" in the death of Dr. King. The evidence heard today, if accepted as valid, "could point to a conspiracy in the assassination of President Kennedy," he said.

Mr. Stokes said the committee inquiry had served to show that "never again should our society respond as it did in the aftermath of the deaths of these two leaders. We did not give these men the types of investigation in depth which were commensurate with the dignity of their lives."

The committee has found no evidence that Dr. King, the civil rights leader, was shot by his convicted killer, James Earl Ray, who is now in prison in Tennessee. However, the committee has heard evidence that Mr. Ray may have had assistance and that he was prompted to kill by an offer of money for Dr. King's death.

The second-ranking member of the panel, Richardson Preyer, Democrat of North Carolina, said tonight that the committee's conclusions and recommendations would be issued tomorrow for publication in Sunday newspapers.

Mr. Preyer, who said he found today's witnesses "persuasive," said the panel was trying to decide how the testimony should be pursued — whether, for example, it should be referred to the Justice Department. The committee itself, its long months of hearings completed, goes out of existence next Wednesday.

Mr. Weiss and Mr. Aschkenasy said that they reached their conclusions by taking the Dictabelt and test recordings and comparing bursts of gunfire and echoes at a series of points as the motorcycle moved down the street behind the Kennedy limousine.

Other Explanations Rejected

The professors rejected committee members' suggestions that the sounds on the Dictabelt recording might have been backfire from moving vehicles, exploding firecrackers or perhaps just "acoustic mirages."

They said that while they could not state positively that the noises were made by rifle fire, the noise pattern and reverberating echoes were certain to have been made by something as loud as a rifle.

All three of the acoustics experts testifying today served on panels that examined the White House tape recordings in connection with the Watergate case. Dr. Barger helped analyze the celebrated 18 1/2-minute gap in one White House tape.

Also testifying today was H.B.B. McLain, a Dallas police officer who is believed to have been riding the motorcycle whose microphone apparently stuck in the open position and carried the sounds of the shooting. Mr. McLain said he was not aware that his microphone was on but that "it had stuck before."

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