

JFK Assassination FORUM

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THE ACOUSTICS EVIDENCE - CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

by Chris Scally

Most, if not all, of us were caught completely unawares by the turn of events which took place as the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) entered the final stages of its investigation. The disclosure that acoustics evidence had established the existence of a second assassin "beyond a reasonable doubt" forced the Committee to conclude that JFK "was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy", and was for many people the proof that years of dedicated and painstaking research had not been in vain.

However, there are a few points regarding the acoustics evidence which call for careful examination, since they could pose problems which might critically effect the acceptability of the HSCA's conclusions.

Briefly, the acoustics evidence resulted from analyses of a static-ridden Dictabelt tape recording of the transmissions on Dallas Police Radio Channel 1 at the time of the assassination. The segment of tape under examination was recorded when a police motorcyclist left his transmitter switch stuck in the "open" position for a period of time which encompassed the actual shooting. Hidden from the human ear in the noises of Dealey Plaza on that tape, therefore, was a complete sound recording of the assassination, the only such recording known to exist.

A number of people have questioned the authenticity of the tape upon which the acoustics experts based their findings, but all these doubts appear to be based on misinformation or deception.

Most importantly, the acoustics experts themselves are convinced of the authenticity of the recording. One of them has said that if he were told that the transmitter was located other than in Dealey Plaza, "I would go there - and I would expect to find a replica of Dealey Plaza in that location."

The acoustics evidence itself is perhaps a more serious cause for concern. On September 11, 1978, Dr James E. Barger testified before the House Committee. Dr Barger, the chief scientist at the Boston acoustics firm of Bolt, Beranek and Newman, told them that the police tape showed that three shots had been fired at the President from the 6th floor window on the Book Depository where Oswald allegedly hid. In addition to these three shots, however, Dr Barger said that there was a 50/50 chance that a fourth shot had been fired from a point behind the fence atop of the Grassy Knoll. This additional shot, according to Dr Barger, was the third in the four-shot sequence.

Private researchers subsequently established that Bolt, Beranek and Newman (a) were not allowed access to any photographic evidence to assist them in their work, and (b) did not conduct test firings from any locations other than the two specified to them by the HSCA. It was also established that they had been unable to determine with certainty the location of the motorcycle with the jammed transmitter. In the light of these "grey areas" in the evidence, a number of people, including this author, called on the HSCA to re-examine the acoustics evidence. Surprisingly, this appears to have been done, as the Committee

THE FREUDIAN SLIP OF THE MONTH

by G. Robert Blakey

We reproduce below a recent reply from the HSCA's Chief Counsel to a private researcher and would draw our readers' attention to the second paragraph.

With our tongue even more in our cheek than usual, dare we ask Mr Blakey what he REALLY knows about the background to the John F. Kennedy assassination - and will it be revealed in the forthcoming Final Report when it is published???

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Select Committee on Assassinations

U.S. House of Representatives

3369 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ANNEX 2
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

November 21, 1978

Mr. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of October 17, 1978, and for your interest in the work of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

Let me assure you that the comments raised in your letter have been brought to the attention of those people directly involved in the assassination of President Kennedy for their use.

Since the Committee's inception, the comments and suggestions of concerned citizens such as yourself who have taken the time to write have been appreciated and given us interesting issues to study.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

G. Robert Blakey

G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel and Director

GRB:jl