

Randi, in my work I have occasion to view dozens of autopsy reports and very rarely will an ex-ray be of any value, particularly where the missile, the bullet in this case, is no longer in the body. I don't think the ex-ray would shed very much light. But I think it ought to be made clear to the public that this autopsy was done by Commander J J Humes, who was the senior pathologist at the Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Maryland. He at the time was assisted by two other pathologists. I have his testimony before me, as I'm looking at it now, and in answer to the question as to where the point of entry was, his answer is as follows, and I quote. "We reached the conclusion that this missile was fired at the President from a point above and behind him, Sir." Now it is his opinion as well as the testimony of most of the doctors at Parkland Hospital, and I've had occasion to read their testimony, that the point of entry was the back and not the front. Now it is true that one or two of the doctors at Parkland were initially of the opinion that the point of entry was at the front of the neck, but that was before they had an opportunity to explore it. Now there's a vast difference between a treating doctor seeing a man in extremis, as unfortunately President Kennedy was, and a pathologist who is searching and has an opportunity to examine, say the head and neck in this instance, to explore the exact trajectory of the bullet. And it was the unanimous opinion of the pathologists that there was no point of entry from the front but that the point of entry was in the rear, the back of the head.

(comments by other panelists)

I think, however, whatever the initial description may have been of the wound the testimony that Dr Perry as well as Dr Carrico gave, and these are both doctors at Parkland Hospital, was to the effect that they were of the opinion that the wound on the neck was a point of exit. They went along with the proposition that the point of entry was the back of the head. We must bear in mind that initially these doctors were not concerned whether it was a point of entry or exit or exactly where the wounds as such were. They knew they had a man who was dying on their hands, their main concern was to treat him and to try to save the President's life. Their testimony is unequivocal. Now I think, Randi, in starting off this program with a discussion of the bullet wounds, I think gets us off what I think is what is probably more germane to the subject, although this is surely important, is what's its relevance? What is the point being made? Is it that those who attack the Warren Report say that when the Warren Commission concludes that all three bullets were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald from behind, do they question that? Is the point that they are trying to make that maybe there was a fourth shot fired, one from the front? I must say that in reading the testimony, you must take the total picture. The proof eventually, as, if we do go into it, and I assume we will, it's unfortunate that we start on this minute point. Its relevance, as I see it, is only that those who attack the Warren Report say that that the Warren Report failed to recognize that there was a fourth bullet and therefore there must have been another assassin who fired at the President.

(comments by other panelists)

Well, Mrs Meagher, I think of course the subject of whether the point of entry was from the rear or the front is as you say at least debatable to some extent. But I'd like to pose this question for those proponents who say there was one shot or more that may have come from the front of the President. Seated directly in front of the President was Governor Connally, in the automobile, in front of Governor Connally was a Secret Service man. I think that everybody agrees that the bullet that entered the Governor came from behind...from behind Governor Connally...well, whatever his position...everyone's in agreement that that bullet came from behind. Now wouldn't it seem odd that if in fact a bullet came from the front, one, that no one observed that person, and of course the three persons that I just mentioned would be facing that way, and of course the cars in front of the Presidential car, and isn't it unlikely that the Secret Service agent or Governor Connally would not be struck by the bullet because they were sitting directly in front of the President ...

(comments by other panelists)

Well, Randi, I think we ought to clear up the so-called mystery about the ex-rays and the pictures. The chief pathologist testified unequivocally that many ex-rays were taken just before the autopsy was performed as well as photographs. He described his findings in great detail. Those ex-rays and photographs are available. Now it is true that they weren't presented as exhibits before the Warren Commission, but apparently this body didn't find it necessary based on the testimony they had before them to call for the production. Now, to infer merely because they were not marked as exhibits that therefore they might show something contrary to what has been testified is I think unfair commenting. Now insofar as where the shots came from, I think you well pointed out that most people when a shot occurs cannot tell the direction it came from. Professor Hugo Muensterberg of Harvard many years ago conducted experiments exactly on that point and demonstrated that when a shot is fired most people, particularly when they don't anticipate the shot going off, can't tell where it came from. But I'd like to make this final observation: marked into evidence were two exhibits, Commission Exhibit 385 and Commission Exhibit 388. Now these diagrams show the point of travel of both bullets that struck President Kennedy. Now both clearly indicate--they're in evidence, they're available in the testimony, anybody can look at them--they clearly indicate that the path of the bullet, the one that struck the President in the right side of his head as the one that hit him in the back of the neck, both go from the back forward, downward. Now it seems to me if the trajectory is from the back forward on a downward plane it would certainly logically indicate from a point of view of scientific certainty that the point that bullet came from was from the rear rather than from the front because it's inconceivable that he could be struck from a bullet from the front that started below and went upward, particularly with two people sitting in front of him.

(comments by other panelists)

(The Governor was struck) in the rear, he was struck unequivocally in the back, in the back of his body, and it went through his rib, his chest, broke a rib, went through his right wrist and finally landed in his left thigh...on a downward trajectory...

(comments by other panelists)

Randi, if I may, I think on the subject of point of entry or exit it's kind of the things that I don't think we can resolve. I'd like if possible to go back to Sylvan Fox's book, if I may. I read it and found it to be great interest. But the one thing about the book that I found disturbing is the fact that Sylvan Fox seems to impugn the motives of the Warren Commission. He says in his book that they seemed to be acting under a compunction, a duty to comfort the American people, that in listening to the testimony of the many witnesses--there was about 550 odd witnesses--17,000 pages of testimony--15 volumes of it including 11 volumes of exhibits--they say the committee patted us on the head, told us our fears were groundless, that what they wanted to do, this committee, was to avoid creating any turmoil in the American people. Now I find it disturbing, Mr Fox, that you would suggest that the Warren Committee in the search for the facts were motivated by a desire not to find any accomplice, or any Government, Communist or fascist, that might conceivably have been in back of this assassination.

(comments by other panelists)

Well, Sylvan, let me quote you precisely...page 40...you say, and you're talking now about the Warren Commission, "Avoiding detection was made easier by an investigative body that hoped it would not discover any conspiracy reaching into the fabric of the nation. Such a discovery, had it been made, would have created new crises in the society even greater than the crises that surrounded the ~~assassination~~ death of the President."...I don't doubt for a moment (that such discovery would have created new crises) but on the other hand I don't doubt the fact that if there was anyone else involved or implicated the Warren Commission would have so reported it...

(comments by other panelists)

I think we ought to get this situation clear. It's one thing for anyone to disagree with a conclusion of the Warren Commission. If you think that four bullets were fired, it's a matter of opinion, you could debate it and conceivably sustain that point of view. If you think the shots came from the front, fine. If you think, as a matter of fact, that there were accomplices, whoever they were, that's a matter of opinion. But what I find troublesome is not the viewpoint of Sylvan Fox where he disagrees with the conclusions, and I think any one of us has a right to disagree, and they will continue for years and years to come to disagree, but I think it's unfair to impugn the motivation of the Warren Commission, to suggest for even a moment that they would exonerate any possible accomplice, or foreign government, simply because of concern for the American people, is to say in effect that the Warren Commission did not do their job. Now it's one thing to say they left out the ex-rays, they left out the pictures, you say that's a defect ...one of many...but I think it's a far cry to go from that to say that they were motivated by the desire to exonerate any accomplice. And I'd like to ask you, Sylvan, you did a lot of work on the subject, do you have any proof --I've read each one of the charges you've made, maybe as we go along we'll go into them, you talk about the bullets and the ex-rays, fine--do you have any proof, any evidence, and I'm not talking about theories, it's so easy to theorize that maybe Castro arranged the assassination...you can come up with any theory you like...have you got any proof, any evidence, to the effect that there ~~was~~ was an accomplice, be it an individual or a foreign government, that assisted Oswald in the assassination...

(comments by other panelists)

I don't agree with you...it's one thing to say that a person is inefficient and therefore didn't do a thorough job...but I think that's a far cry from saying that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and the other six distinguished leaders of this country were motivated by a desire to withhold information from the country. If you want to say it was withheld because of neglect on their part, that's a matter of opinion --but to impugn or to attack their motive, that's the part where you and I (we disagree)...

(comments by other panelists)

I think it was an exhaustive thorough analysis of the facts...no, no no, I didn't say (that I got all the answers) at all...To say that it is free of defects, I don't think that it's possible for seven men or any investigative body to come up with all the answers. But I do feel that it was a conscientious effort to come up with the answers. The fact that an ex-ray wasn't offered in evidence, or a photograph wasn't offered in evidence, which is available, to me does not destroy...

(questions)

It's available to the Commission, they haven't been destroyed...

(comments by other panelists)

Well, let's get to the evidence...let's get to the so-called errors...

(dissertation by other panelists)

I think the age of the cartridges is irrelevant. The fact that the testimony does not dot every eye, that every eye isn't dotted or "T" crossed, isn't particularly important. The fact is that the three spent cartridges that were found in the Book Depository were tested and found to have been fired from the rifle that belonged to Oswald. In the automobile of President Kennedy was found one shell as well as fragments of two others. And so it seems to me that the age wouldn't be particularly important, one way or the other.

(comments by other panelist)

I think it was based...when you say an invention, remember the Commission heard a lot of testimony and based on testimony they drew certain conclusions. Now if you're of the opinion that a conclusion they drew was erroneous, you're entitled to it, and it may be erroneous...

(comment by other panelist)

What is the relevance...let's get specifically...how important...what light does it shed, ~~on~~ on the subject we're discussing, as to the age of the ammunition...let me ask you this--is there any question in your mind that the shells that were fired, were fired from the rifle that Lee Oswald Harvey owned?

(reply by other panelist)

Mrs Meagher, is there any question in your mind that Oswald fired the shots that killed President Kennedy?...Who do you think did it then?...You've done extensive research...I'm just curious...you've drawn a conclusion now...I'm asking you now...after all, facts have to eventually lead to a conclusion,

erroneously or not, and I assume, having spent so much time on this subject and having done such extensive investigation, you've come up with a conclusion about it. Now are you saying that the conclusion of the Warren Commission that Oswald was the one who fired, say, some of the shots, we won't say, we'll leave open the question of whether anyone else fired some shots...Well, I'm asking her, she may have an answer. The Warren Commission had an answer and I'm curious as to whether you have an answer...

(Comments by other panelists)

Well, would you accept the conclusion that conceivably Oswald might have been the perpetrator of this crime...Did he own the rifle that was implicated?

(comments by other panelist)

Do you reject the proof that he had, Oswald had ordered and obtained under a fictitious name of Haddad, Hidell, A Hidell, a fictitious name that he used on many occasions, do you reject the proof that he had ordered this gun from this Klein's sporting goods store in Chicago?...He may have ordered a different gun, but did he receive this particular gun? Does the Klein's sporting ...is there proof in the record that the Klein's sporting goods store shows that they sent this very gun which was found on the sixth floor of this Book Depository building? Do you accept that testimony or do you reject it?...The Italian gun...there's only one gun that was found... it's true that there is reference in your book, on the first day, of there being possibly some confusion, of possibly its being a German gun, but that has been discounted, one gun was definitely found there.

(comments by other panelists)

I would have assumed that on the subject at least of the identity of the rifle we would have some agreement, but apparently even in that area some of us at least, or Mrs Meagher is of the opinion that there's grave doubt whether that rifle belonged to Oswald. I would just like to read the conclusion of the Warren Commission, which did, I think, an exhaustive investigation, that is, they and the FBI, on the subject of the rifle, tracing it, where it was purchased from, fingerprints on it, and here's their conclusion (quotes from Warren Report) ...and I must say that they proved unequivocally that this rifle was purchased from the Klein's sporting store, it was shipped to an A Hidell, there's no question that that's a name that was used by Oswald time and time again, it was identified by handwriting experts, cards on him had that name. True, Oswald's palmprint was on that rifle in a position that proves that he had handled it while it was disassembled. Three, fibers found on the rifle most probably came from the shirt Oswald was wearing on the day of assassination. Four, a photograph taken in the yard of Oswald's apartment showed him holding this rifle. And five, the rifle was kept among Oswald's possessions from the time of its purchase until the day of assassination. The Commission concluded that the rifle used to assassination President Kennedy...was owned and possessed by...Oswald. I think that on this subject, whatever may be said in other areas, open to question, but I think on this subject the proof was rather convincing.

(comments by other panelists)

Well, Curtis, what's your conclusion? Do you go along with the statement I made, that the preponderance of the evidence is that the rifle that was found on the sixth floor is the rifle that Oswald had purchased from this Klein's sporting store?

(reply by panelist)