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Vol. 5
Copy 3 of 9

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Report of Proceedings

Held at

Washington, D. C.

Monday, January 27, 1964

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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION

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ON THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Washington, D. C.

Monday, January 27, 1964.

The President's Commission met, pursuant to call, at 2:30 p.m., in the Hearing Room, Fourth Floor, 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast, Washington, D. C., Chief Justice Earl Warren presiding

PRESENT:

Chief Justice Earl Warren, Chairman

Senator Richard B. Russell, Member

Senator John Sherman Cooper, Member

Representative Hale Boggs, Member

John J. McCloy, Member

Allen W. Dulles, Member

J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel

(Excerpt)

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20

The Chairman. Of course there are so many Spanish-speaking people down in Texas.

Mr. Rankin. In the area.

The Chairman. That she might have gotten it from someone else.

Mr. Rankin. Then there is a great range of material in regard to the wounds, and the autopsy and this point of exit or entrance of the bullet in the front of the neck, and that all has to be developed much more than we have at the present time.

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We have an explanation there in the autopsy that probably a fragment came out the front of the neck, but with the elevation the shot must have come from, and the angle, it seems quite apparent now, since we have the picture of where the bullet entered in the back, that the bullet entered below the shoulder blade to the right of the backbone, which is below the place where the picture shows the bullet came out in the neckband of the shirt in front, and the bullet, according to the autopsy didn't strike any bone at all, that particular bullet, and go through.

So that how it could turn and --

Rep. Boggs. I thought I read that bullet just went in a finger's length.

Mr. Rankin. That is what they first said. They reached in and they could feel where it came, it didn't go any further than that, about part of the finger or something, part of the autopsy, and then they proceeded to reconstruct where they thought

21

the bullet went, the path of it, and, which is, we have to go into considerable items and try to find out how they could reconstruct that when they first said that they couldn't even feel the path beyond the part of a finger.

And then how it could become elevated; even so it raised rather than coming out at a sharp angle that it entered, all of that, we have to go into, too, and we are asking for help from the ballistic experts on that.

We will have to probably get help from the doctors about it, and find out, we have asked for the original notes of the autopsy on that question, too.

Now, the bullet fragments are now, part of them are now, with the Atomic Energy Commission, who are trying to determine by a new method, a process that they have, of whether they can relate them to various guns and the different parts, the fragments, whether they are a part of one of the bullets that was broken and came out in part through the neck, and just what particular assembly of bullet they were part of.

They have had it for the better part of two and a-half weeks and we ought to get an answer.

Jan. 10

So the basic problem, what kind of a wound it is in the front of the neck is of great importance to this investigation.

We believe it must be related in some way to the three sheets from the rear.

Sen. Cooper. You mean in the back?

Mr. Rankin. One, or something from a shot at the top of the head.

Mr. McCloy. It is possible that the third shot could have had a fragmentation.

Sen. Cooper. One doctor, as I remember, projected manual massage, to resuscitate him, that would cause the bullet to come back out of the back. Do you remember that?

Sen. Russell. Have you collected these charges against the raw material in here?

Mr. Rankin. I haven't, we may.

Mr. McCloy. Are we going to have at the examination of Marina the exhibits, for example, the bracelet and the rifle itself because she has testified first that the rifle was not the rifle. later she changed her testimony in that respect.

Mr. Rankin. Yes.

Mr. McCloy. Will we get the rifle and the bracelets so she will be confronted with them?

Mr. Rankin. Yes.

Her testimony about the rifle, you know she only admitted to that after pictures were found and she had destroyed the pictures that were in the photo album after the mother had suggested that to her, and they found this in one of his sacks that they found other material, other clothing.

They have better than 400 different objects of physical evidence. Some of them are not related at all. They just happened

to find them.

We think that the wound in the neck has to be related to one of these others, but the problem is difficult to determine because we have a statement from the hospital that the bullet that was more whole than the other was found on the stretcher which they brought the President in to the hospital on, and then we have other testimony later that goes back over the same ground in which the person in charge of the stretcher and the attendant said that this bullet was found under the blanket on the stretcher Governor Connally was on, and it is a complete --

Sen. Russell. I thought it was found on the stretcher of the President.

Mr. Rankin. That was the first story. And that is what we have to deal with, a story of that kind to try to reconcile it with people who actually handled the stretcher that Governor Connally was on and picked the bullet from under the blanket.

Now, that evidence is quite superior to the other man's, but we have to check it out some more to determine that.

Sen. Russell. This isn't going to be something that would run you stark mad.

Mr. Rankin. I don't know what we will run into, but --

Let me ask you about it because I have never seen anything about it. Whatever happened with that fellow who bought the front page ad and called the President a Communist?