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FBI chills claim JFK killed by two gunmen

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI said Monday that the House Assassinations Committee was misled by its experts in believing that two gunmen took part in the killing of John F. Kennedy.

The committee's experts "did not scientifically prove that a gunshot was fired by a second gunman from the grassy knoll area of Dealey Plaza during the assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963," the FBI said, adding:

"Therefore, the House Select Committee on Assassinations' finding that 'scientific acoustical evidence establishes a high probability that two gunmen fired at President John F. Kennedy' is invalid."

Based on acoustical tests conducted in 1978 — 15 years after the assassination — the committee said it was probable that four shots were fired at the president's motorcade. Since only three of those could have been fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, a conspiracy was highly probable, the House committee concluded.

When it published its conclusions, the committee asked the FBI to study the tests by Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc., Mark R. Weiss, and Ernest Ashkenasy.

Kennedy was killed while riding in an open car past the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas' Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963. The Warren Commission determined that he was killed by shots fired only by Oswald, who was killed two days later.

On Dec. 29, 1978, Weiss, an acoustics expert who also testified on the 18½ minute tape gap in the Watergate scandal, testified there was a 95 percent chance — evidence "beyond a reasonable doubt" — that Kennedy was assassinated in a crossfire by two riflemen acting in concert.

He based that conclusion on soundwaves recorded from a motorcycle policeman's radio in Dallas before, during and after the assassination and those produced by a test firing of a rifle on the scene.

But the FBI disputed the experts' conclusion that the sound pattern was unique to the Dallas location. The FBI said similar recordings were made in November 1979 during a violent confrontation of the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazi party and the Communist Workers Party in Greensboro, N.C.

"A probability of 95 percent or better was found that this gunshot in Greensboro, N.C., in November 1979 also represents the same impulsive pattern found on the DPD (Dallas Police Department) recording during the presidential assassination in November 1963," the FBI said.

The House committee has disbanded. Attempts to obtain comment on the FBI report from the Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, who was chairman of the committee, were unsuccessful.

The House committee report in 1979 was the first official study of the assassination to dispute the conclusion of the Warren Commission that Oswald acted alone in the killing of Kennedy. The FBI has consistently maintained that it found no evidence of a conspiracy.