Secret Service: Withholding;JFK Re-enactment HW 5/17/77

Another horrible example, of withholding not fpr need or within exemption but to prevent embarrassment, is the undated Tom Kelley memo on the 5/23/64 re-enactment in Dallas. It is headed merely "MEMORANDUM FOR FILE.2

In it he recounts his trip to Dallas, etc, and explains the three shots, limiting to three shots.

Necessary measurements were not made with the Presidential car before it was sent to Hess and Eisenhardt, at Cincinnati for rebuilding. So they called and had Bill Hess compute where the top of JFK's head was.

Taking all factors, even the amount of air in the tires and the give in the seats, Hess placed the top of JFK's head at ~~52~~x 52.78 inches above ground level.

So the FBI, Secret Service and Commission re-enact and with surveyors measure and they get a number - 62 inches. Or ten inches higher.

Kelley saw no trouble in this.

He noted that they made "all measurements ... with this variance in height in mind."

So, when he testified before the Warren Commission Kelley merely testified that JFK had the seat adjusted 10 inches wrong and it all came out right. I go into this in Whitewash.

Hess also said the level of the jump seat was three inches below that of the rear seat. This means that from Hess' measurement if JFK and Connally were about the same height there would be little difference in their heights as they sat in the car.

On the other hand, if JFK's seat was up by 10 inches, what I recall as the maximum, and Connaly was 3 inches before the Hess height, with the Kelley height, were it true, Kennedy would have been 13 inches, more or less, heigher than Connally. There is no picture that shows this or is close to it.

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

On May 23, 1964, accompanied by Inspector Jim Malley and Leo Gauthier of the FBI and Mr. Arlen Specter of the staff of the President's Commission, I flew to Dallas to assist in the reenactment of the circumstances of the assassination of President Kennedy and for the purpose of establishing the points at which the various shots took effect.

The FBI had been requested by the Commission in a lengthy memorandum to conduct tests and measurements and to establish certain points at which the shots could have been fired, based on an examination of the Zapruder film, the Nix films and a film by a woman named Muchmore. These films had all been reviewed by myself and Special Agent Howlett in a number of meetings at the Commission. We found ourselves substantially in agreement with theories proposed by the doctors at Bethesda that the one shot went through the President and entered the back of Governor Connally, did all the damage to Governor Connally and the bullet was then found in good condition on the stretcher occupied by the Governor at the hospital. Another shot did the damage to the President's head. The preponderance of the evidence is that three shots were fired; this would mean that one shot missed but there is no indication which of the three shots missed, that is, whether it was the first, second or the third.

In attempting to simulate the conditions in the bubble top at the time of the assassination, the Commission requested the use of a seven passenger open car. The only one available in view of the modification that has been made on the bubble top, is one of the follow-up cars, 679X, which was flown to Dallas and was driven by SA Hickey during the reenactment.

A telephone call was made to Mr. Bill Hess of Hess and Eisenhardt and he was requested to ascertain for us through his drawings of the original bubble top, the height of the President's head while seated in the bubble top before the modification. After he had charted the President's position he stated that the top of the President's head would have been 52.78 inches from ground level. He arrived at this conclusion by using a layout of the bubble top and estimated the condition of the car when loaded, the depression of the tires, the flection of the custions, etc., and measured from the ground line to the point where the top of a man weighing approximately 173 pounds and 73 inches tall would have been. He advised that the cushion in the bubble top after it was modified for President Kennedy had a very hard cushion, there was very little flection at the President's request. He also stated that the jump seat in the bubble top would be approximately 6 inches from the right hand door and the level of the jump seat would be three inches below the level of the back seat.

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With these measurements, when the special agents of the FBI, who played the part of the President and Governor Connally, were placed in the car it was found that the top of the agent's head was 62 inches from the ground. Therefore, all the measurements taken by the surveyor at the various points on the street were measured with this variance of height in mind. The results of the simulation will be the subject of testimony before the Commission and will be included in the Commission's report.

Thomas J. Kelley
Inspector

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