

Memorandum

- Tolson
- Belmont
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TO : Mr. Belmont

DATE: December 24, 1963

FROM : A. Rosen *AR*

SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

During discussions with Inspector Malley, J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel for the President's Commission, expressed considerable interest in the official autopsy reports prepared by doctors at the National Naval Medical Center concerning the death of President Kennedy. Mr. Rankin was advised that because of the strong desire on the part of the President's family to keep the autopsy report as confidential as possible the Bureau had not requested a copy of the report.

In view of the interest displayed by Mr. Rankin, arrangements were made to obtain a copy of the autopsy report from the Secret Service for the Bureau's use and a request was also made that Secret Service furnish a copy of the report to Mr. Rankin. Secret Service advised that this would be done. In discussions with Mr. Rankin on 12-23-63 he was advised of the action taken by the Bureau. Mr. Rankin stated he has now received a copy of the autopsy report from the Secret Service and he expressed sincere appreciation for the Bureau making this possible.

It is noted that the six-page autopsy report discloses no new information of significance in addition to that already obtained through investigation. One of the reasons expressed by Mr. Rankin for his keen interest in the report was the fact that newspaper accounts and other unverified sources have advanced the theory that one bullet entered the President's throat from the front. The autopsy report discredits this speculation, in fact, the report unequivocally states that it is the opinion of the examining physicians that the President died as the result of two gunshot wounds and the projectiles were fired from a point "behind and somewhat above the level of the deceased." As previously reported, one bullet entered the back below the neck while the other entered the skull.

ACTION

As the Warren Commission is going to get down every wild newspaper story it will never finish. H

CLOSURE - The attached copy of the autopsy report will be maintained in the Bureau files, but no further dissemination of it is being made at this time.

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- Enclosure
- 1 - Mr. DeLoach
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- FDT:mlt (8)

SOVIET SECTION

SUB CONTROL

Section 2

Memo to Mr. Belmont from Rosen
Re: Assassination of President

*Malley should
know how to
spell Gov.
Connally's name*

During this session Commander James J. Humes advanced the theory that the first shot entered the President's body in the rear in the neck region a few inches below the head and followed a pattern through the neck and exited in the front without encountering any bone or other objects which slowed the bullet to any degree. Commander Humes was of the opinion the bullet continued and struck Governor Connally in the back on the right-hand side below the shoulder and exited on the right-hand side of Governor Connally in the chest area. Commander Humes stated that here again, based on medical reports received from doctors in Texas who examined Governor Connally, the bullet met with no serious obstruction and passed through the body, merely grazing one of the rib bones. It was Commander Humes' opinion that the bullet from the first shot apparently lodged in some manner in the clothing of Governor Connally and this bullet is the one which was found on the stretcher on which Governor Connally was brought to Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Commander Humes states this bullet was not damaged in any way and it is for this reason he feels that the first shot definitely passed through both the body of the President and Governor Connally.

In explaining his feelings concerning this theory, Commander Humes stated that another shot is believed to have hit the right wrist of Governor Connally with such an impact that it caused the bullet to break into many fragments and he noted that many fragments were found in the right wrist area of Governor Connally as well as in the thigh of the left leg.

Relative to the third shot which was fired, which based on the photographic material available is believed to be the one which hit the President's head, Commander Humes advised that there is no question that this bullet separated into many fragments upon impact and many fragments were found in the skull area of the President. He noted that one fragment had apparently struck the front windshield from the inside inasmuch as the examination of the windshield did detect some lead deposit where an object had struck the inside of the windshield. Commander Humes states that the fragment which struck the windshield could have been from this shot which struck the President's head or could have been a fragment from the shot which hit Governor Connally's wrist.

The other doctors present did not completely confirm the theory of Commander Humes but felt, based on their review of the pictures, noting the movements of Governor Connally in the President's automobile and the general location of the occupants in the car, that there was a possibility this theory was correct.

Staff members of the Commission gave no indication what additional action they planned relative to this theory. It is noted that any comments made in the past by the Bureau relative to the shots that struck the President and Governor Connally were based completely on medical reports furnished the Bureau by Doctors at Parkland Hospital and the results of the autopsy of the U. S. Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland.

ENCLOSURE

ENCLOSURE

Section 9