

SOURCE OF SHOTS - PRESIDENT'S WOUNDS

Statements of Witnesses - Bobby W. HARGIS
Depositor -

April 8, 1964, 6 H 293-6

Five days earlier, the Commission staff heard Officer Martin whose deposition takes about 4-1/2 pages, with a large part of the first one devoted to introductory material. Martin, like Hargis, was a left flanker of the Presidential car in the motorcade. Unlike Martin, Hargis takes up only a little over 2-1/2 pages, of which about a half page is introductory. He also is a veteran of 9 years 7 months ^{of service} at the time of ~~his~~ ^{his} testimony.

His position in the motorcade was next to the Presidential car.

Like Officer Chaney, to whom the Commission didn't devote even a scant 2-1/2 pages of testimony where they could find time and space to give Mrs. Bledsoe who had essentially nothing to contribute and who was abused by her appearance 10 times that much, Officer Hargis saw Gov. Connally at the time of the first shot. The following excerpt completely confirms Connally's testimony which the Commission could not suppress but did choose not to believe: "... and Governor Connally turned around. He was sitting directly in front of him, and a real shocked and surprised expression on his face." (p.294)

This version by Hargis is completely corroborated by the Zapruder pictures, if not as reproduced by the Commission, as reproduced in LIFE.

Hargis at first thought it was the Governor who had been shot, but he then saw the President leaning over in a manner that made him think the President "was bending over to hear what he (Connally) had to say."

After Hargis says he doesn't know "whether it was the second or the third shot (that killed the President). Everything happened so fast," Stern then said, "But, you cannot now recall more than two shots?"

Hardly what Hargis had said, for Hargis had specified a second and a third shot. Presumably Hargis understood Stern to mean the second and third shot following the first. In any event, I point out this misrepresentation of Hargis's testimony which came immediately following something the Commission was not anxious to hear. On the number of shots, Hargis, an experienced police officer, said, "everything was moving so fast at the time that there could have been 30 more shots that I probably never would have noticed them."

Hargis then described how he was splattered with "blood and brain, and kind of a bloody water." At that time he said, "the Presidential car slowed down. I heard somebody say, 'Get going,'" and he doesn't know from which car he heard it.

The subject of the besplattering is dropped so fast that he is not at any point asked whether one side was splattered more than the other, etc. There is no way of telling what part of his body or gear or vehicle were splattered. There is not a single solitary question.

He raced to the front of the motorcade to alert the lead car and when the motorcade advanced toward the hospital, "I stopped and got off my motorcycle and ran to the right-hand side of the street, behind the light pole." Asked what his impression was "at the time regarding the source of the shots", he replied, "Well, at the time it sounded like the shots were right next to me. There wasn't any way in the world I could tell where they were coming from, but at the time there was something in my head that said that they probably (p.294) could have been coming from the railroad overpass, because I thought since I had got splattered, with blood - I was just a little back and left of - just a little bit back and left of Mrs. Kennedy, but I didn't know. I had a feeling that it might have been from the Texas Bank Depository, and these two places was the primary place that could have been shot from." (p.295)

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Note that Hargis's initial impression was that the shots were right next to him. By the time the President was hit with the fatal bullet, the Presidential car was very near the area of the arcade and the trees on the north side of Elm.

After parking his vehicle, he ran across the street to the north side of Elm, "I ran to the light post" (note how he is not asked the significance of the identification of the landmark of the lamppost, which in such a short span of time he has done twice), and I ran up to this kind of a little wall, brick wall up there to see if I could get a better look on the bridge, and, of course, I was looking all around that place by that time. I knew it couldn't have come from the county courthouse because that place was swarming with deputy sheriffs over there." He didn't ~~go~~ cross the picket fence, which he didn't recall. When he didn't notice anything in the area of the overpass or the ~~inxxx~~ incline or around the Depository, he said, "That is what got me."

Here you have a series of clear suggestions from a man as close as anyone outside the vehicle to the Presidential car that the shots, or at least the first shot, came not from the Book Depository but from the area to the west of it. If the Commission was consistent and used the basis it apparently decided that there were three shots, the number of people who testified to that number, it certainly had to decide that one of the shots came from this area because an overwhelming number of the people whose testimony I have read and whose actions have been described certainly thought at least one shot came from that area. (p.296)