

Specter Predicted One-Bullet Theory Would Stir Doubt

By DONALD A. McDONOUGH and DENNIS M. HIGGINS
Of The Inquirer Staff

District Attorney Arlen Specter confided more than two years ago he believed the public would never accept his "single bullet" theory that helped lead the Warren Commission to conclude that Lee Harvey Oswald alone shot and killed President John F. Kennedy.

"I don't think anyone will ever believe what we've reported," Specter was quoted as saying when the assassination report was completed and he returned to Philadelphia late in September, 1964.

RECALLED BY CRUMLISH

The Inquirer learned of Specter's apparent misgivings on Thursday during an exclusive interview with former District Attorney James C. Crumlish, the man who released Specter so he could work as one of 14 junior counsels for the Warren Commission.

Crumlish said he recalled that when Specter came back to work as chief of the Litigation Division in the District At-

Related Story and Sketch on Page 3

torney's office, he gave him one of the first copies of the Warren Report.

"I'm giving you this book because you were so good to me to let me be a part of the Warren Commission," Crumlish quoted Specter as saying.

'UNEASY, UNCERTAIN'

Crumlish said he read the report, and a week later asked Specter to elaborate on his "single-bullet" theory—that held that one bullet passed through President Kennedy's neck and struck Texas Gov. John Connally.

"Jim," Crumlish quoted Specter, "I don't think the people are going to believe this—this year, next year or a hundred years from now."

The former District Attorney described Specter's condition during their conversation at the

time as "uneasy, uncertain and without complete control of his thinking."

'WILL BE CHALLENGED'

Crumlish said he recalled Specter saying at another point during their talk that "this thing will be challenged today, tomorrow and forever," but added that he was willing to "rest on it."

"I told him, 'Good luck, buddy,'" Crumlish told The Inquirer.

"He (Specter) did something else which I think now was important," Crumlish said. "He gave me the impression that other people were unwilling or unable to operate the investigation, and that he was running the whole thing."

9 MONTHS ON REPORT

Specter spent nine months with the Warren Commission, making five trips to Dallas, one to Los Angeles and another to Las Vegas during his part in the investigation.

When he successfully campaigned against Crumlish in 1963, his brochures told voters that Specter had originated the "single-bullet" theory.

Under Specter's theory, one of Oswald's bullets hit President Kennedy in the back of the neck, exited through the throat, passed completely through Gov. Connally's back, smashing his right wrist, and finally lodged in his left thigh. The 6.5-millimeter slug, clean and undamaged despite the destruction it assertedly caused, was later recovered.

FINDINGS QUESTIONED

A second bullet missed, the Warren Report concluded, while a third struck President Kennedy in the head and killed him.

Critics of the commission's findings have questioned the "single-bullet" theory since the report was released to the public.

Just this month, Gov. Connally told Life Magazine that he remembers hearing a shot and was turning to see what had happened when he was wounded — and, since bullets travel faster than sound, the same bullet could not have struck them both.

'IT'S A CERTAINTY'

"There is my absolute knowledge . . . that one bullet caused the President's first wound, and that an entirely separate shot struck me," Life quoted Connally as saying. "It's a certainty; I'll never change my mind."

On Wednesday, Specter said at a news conference that the Governor was "just incorrect" in disputing the "single-bullet" decision.

'Single-Bullet' Misgivings Denied

Crumlish Comments 'Absurd,' Specter Says

District Attorney Arlen Specter said Friday that statements attributed to him on the "single-bullet" theory of President Kennedy's death were "absurd" and politically inspired.

Former District Attorney James C. Crumlish told The Inquirer on Thursday that Specter confided to him when the Warren Report was completed that he believed the public would never accept the theory that one

FBI Chief Says Oswald was Sole Assassin. Story on Page 5

bullet struck the President and then wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

"Someone should remind him (Crumlish) that the 1965 campaign for District Attorney of Philadelphia has been over for more than a year," Specter said.

Specter, a Democrat supported by the Republicans, defeated

Crumlish, the Democratic Party nominee, in the election. He refuted any and all statements attributed to him by Crumlish on the topic of the Warren Commission and its controversial report.

"I never confided anything to the former District Attorney, and at no time did I express any misgivings on the conclusions of the Warren Commission," Specter said.

When informed of Specter's denial Friday, Crumlish said he

Continued on Page 5, Column 3

Complete Auction
Sale listings for the week
appear on Page 39.

Crumlish Comments 'Absurd,' Specter Says

Continued from First Page

Specter also denied telling Crumlish that others were either unwilling or unable to operate the commission's investigation and that he was "running the whole thing," as Crumlish put it.

"He is the politically ambitious one, and it is perfectly obvious to me and everyone else that he is using his present office as a base for a political movement," Crumlish said.

"His criticism of me is not well-founded. It is merely his attempt to water down the truth."

EXPRESSED DOUBTS

In Thursday's Inquirer, Crumlish quoted Specter not as having misgivings on the commission's conclusions, but as doubting that the American people would accept, as fact, in the foreseeable future, Specter's theory that the same bullet struck both the President and Gov. Connally.

"It is my view that the commission was correct when it concluded that 'very persuasive evidence' indicated that the 'same bullet which pierced the President's throat also caused Gov. Connally's wounds,'" Specter said.

"I do now, and always have, subscribed to that view. It has always been apparent to me that there would be much comment and much speculation on the momentous events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy because a book was being discussed on new theories on the assassination of President Lincoln, while the Kennedy investigation was in progress.

"Such discussions are healthy in a democratic society, but they do not in any way shake my confidence on the work of the Warren Commission."

"I have never characterized my role with the commission," Specter said. "The notes of testimony on my questioning of certain witnesses speaks for itself, and indicates the extent of my participation."

The District Attorney said only one thing Crumlish said was true — "that I did give him a copy of the report."

Specter at no time Friday referred to Crumlish by name, using instead "the former District Attorney" or "the ex-District Attorney" or third person pronouns.

He said also that he never returned to the D. A.'s office after his nine-month job with the Warren Commission, but almost immediately accepted an assignment as a special assistant State Attorney General to serve as chief counsel for the probe of the magisterial system upon his return to Philadelphia.

REPORT CHALLENGED

Specter's "single-bullet" theory and other key aspects of the Warren Report have been under fire by critics since shortly after the report was made public on Sept. 28, 1964.

Life magazine, in its current issue, quotes Gov. Connally as saying that the "single-bullet" theory is not valid and that it was a "certainty" that two separate bullets caused the President's initial neck wound and the wounds to Connally's body, wrist and thigh.