

JFK probe 'umbrella man'

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WASHINGTON—Shattering at least one part of the conspiracy theory, the mysterious "umbrella man" yesterday emerged after 15 years to say he had no part in John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Conspiracy bugs have long suspected that the unidentified man who opened a black umbrella at the moment Ken-

nedy was shot was signaling an assassin.

But Louis Steven Witt, a self-described conservative from Dallas, told the House Assassinations Committee yesterday that he was merely brandishing the umbrella in protest of Kennedy's liberal policies.

Witt said he was unaware he was being sought as the "umbrella man" until last June, when his photograph—taken moments after Kennedy was

shot—was distributed by the committee to newspapers across the nation.

"I think if the Guinness Book of World Records had a category for people being in the wrong place at the wrong time doing the wrong thing, I would win with not even a close runner-up," the former insurance salesman told the panel.

He said he had never been contacted by the FBI about the shooting. "As far as I know they never made attempts to

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turns up after 15 years

find out who I was, or why I was there."

The committee also heard testimony from experts on photography, anthropology and handwriting analysis that disputed another popular conspiracy theory—that Kennedy was shot by a man impersonating Oswald.

Three panels of scientists studied photographs, fingerprints and handwriting samples of Oswald from the time he enlisted in the Marines in 1956

to the day he was killed in 1963.

Sgt. Cecil Kirk, director of the Mobile Crime Laboratory of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department, said his panel of experts concluded after studying the photos that they "were all of one and the same man—Lee Harvey Oswald."

Clyde Collins Snow, chief of physical anthropological research at the Federal Aviation Administration's Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City, said that

his panel came to the same conclusion after studying the photos of Oswald.

But the question of a second gunman thought to have shot the president from the "grassy knoll" area as Kennedy's motorcade passed through Dealey Plaza was left unresolved.

The committee is winding up its public hearings into the Kennedy assassination this week and is expected to issue a report in December.