

CONNALLY TRANSCRIPT

(1,600)

AUSTIN, TEX., NOV. 23 (AP)-HERE IS THE PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TEXAS GOV. JOHN CONNALLY'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION AND THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT:

I WANT TO MAKE IT....CLEAR THAT I HAVEE NO DESIRE TO PROLONG NOR PERPETUATE THE STARK MEMORIES OF THE TRAGEDY OF THREE YEARS AGO.

THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN ARRANGED SOLELY AS A RESULT OF THE WIDE-SPREAD REQUEST OF NWSMEN...

I AM CONVINCED, BEYOND ANY DOUBT, THAT I WAS NOT STRUCK BY THE FIRST BULLET. I KNOW THAT I HEARD THE FIRST SHOT, THAT I TURNED TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED, AND THAT I WAS STRUCK BY A SECOND SHOT. THE THIRD SHOT STRUCK THE PRESIDENT AND NOT ME.

AS I SAID EARLIER, THIS TESTIMONY WAS PRESENTED TO THE WARREN COMMISSION. THEY CHOSE TO DISAGREE, WHICH IS THEIR PRIVILEGE. I MAINTAIN MY ORIGINAL VIEW, AND ALWAYS SHALL.

I WANT TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SIMPLY BECAUSE I DISAGREE WITH THE WARREN COMMISSION ON THIS ONE DETAIL DOES NOT MEAN THAT I DISAGREE WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THEIR OVERALL FINDINGS.

I THINK THE COMMISSION DID AN OUTSTANDING JOB UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. EACH OF THE MEMBERS OF THAT COMMISSION....ARE MEN OF UNQUESTIONED INTEGRITY OF LONG AND DEVOTED SERVICE TO THEIR NATION... AND MEN WHOSE PATRIOTISM HAS BEEN MANIFESTED SO MANY TIMES...THAT IT NOW IS SOMEWHAT SHOCKING TO ME THAT IN THE BACKLASH OF TRAGEDY JOURNALISTIC SCAVENGERS SUCH AS MARK LANE, ATTEMPT TO IMPUGN THE MOTIVES OF THESE MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY, CAST DOUBTS UPON THE COMMISSION AS A WHOLE AND QUESTION THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF.

I THINK IT IS TIME THAT WE PAUSE AND REFLECT ON WHO THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE AND RATHER THAN CALLING FOR A FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION, WHICH IN MY JUDGMENT IS NEITHER WARRANTED, JUSTIFIED OR DESIRABLE. WE SHOULD TURN OUR ATTENTION TO DOING A LITTLE RESEARCH ON AND EVALUATION OF THE CREDENTIALS OF THE SELF-APPOINTED EXPERTS WHO, WITH NO EVIDENCE, NO NEW FACTS, NEVERTHELESS USE DISTORTION, INFERENCE, INNUENDO, IN ORDER TO CAST DOUBTS AND CREATE CONFUSION. I SUSPECT THAT A SEARCHING INVESTIGATION INTO THEIR OWN CREDENTIALS WILL DIVULGE THAT THEIR MOTIVES HAVE POLITICAL OVERTONES AND THAT THEIR VIEWS HAVE BEEN GIVEN PROMINENCE OUT OF PROPORTION TO THEIR VALUE.

EB39DN

Q: MAY I ASK ARE YOU SATISFIED BEYOND ANY SHADOW OF A DOUBT THERE WAS ONE AND ONLY ONE ASSASSIN?

A: I HAVE NO REASON TO QUESTION IT WHATSOEVER.

Q: HOW DO YOU SQUARE THIS WHEN THE COMMISSION FINDS THAT YOU WERE HIT BY THE FIRST SHOT?

A: OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS ROOM FOR DISAGREEMENT BECAUSE OF THE TIME FACTOR INVOLVED. I CANNOT AND HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO SAY WITH ANY DEGREE OF CERTAINTY, AFTER VIEWING THE FILM, THE PRECISE 1/18TH OF A SECOND I WAS HIT. NOW, BY THE SAME TOKEN I DON'T THINK THE COMMISSION CAN DO SO, NOR CAN ANYONE ELSE. NO ONE CAN SAY TO THE PRECISE 1/18TH OF A SECOND WHEN PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS HIT. EACH OF US WAS STRUCK BEFORE THE REACTION BEGAN TO APPEAR IN THE FILM. I THINK THIS IN ITSELF PROVIDES SUFFICIENT LEEWAY IN THE TIME FACTORS WHEN YOU ARE SPEAKING OF A 20TH OF A SECOND TO PROVIDE AN AREA OF DISAGREEMENT AND YET NOT PROVIDE ANY GREAT SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE.

Q: DID YOU HEAR ALL THREE SHOTS, INCLUDING THE ONE THAT HIT YOU?

A: NO, SIR. I HEARD THE FIRST SHOT THAT DID NOT HIT ME. I DID NOT HEAR THE SHOT THAT HIT ME, AND I HEARD ANOTHER WHICH WAS THE LAST SHOT THAT HIT PRESIDENT KENNEDY. I HEARD ONLY TWO SHOTS. I DID NOT HEAR THE SHOT THAT HIT ME.

Q: DID YOUR WIFE HEAR ALL THREE?

A: VERY CLEARLY. SHE HEARD THREE SHOTS VERY CLEARLY.

Q: IN LIFE MAGAZINE THIS WEEK, YOU SAID WHEN YOU LOOKED DOWN AND SAW YOU WERE COVERED WITH BLOOD YOU THOUGHT THERE WERE EITHER TWO OR THREE PEOPLE INVOLVED. DID YOU FIND OUT SOMETHING AFTER THAT TO MAKE YOU THINK THERE WAS ONLY ONE?

A: THAT WAS MY TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WARREN COMMISSION. THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO MY MIND THEN BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDITY OF THE SHOTS. NOTHING HAS OCCURRED SINCE THEN TO LEND ANY CREDENCE TO IT, WHATEVER.

Q. DO YOU THINK THE PERSON WHO FIRED THE FIRST SHOT IS THE SAME PERSON THAT HIT YOU WITH THE SECOND SHOT?

A: THAT IS THE FINDING OF THE COMMISSION AND I HAVE NO REASON WHATEVER TO QUESTION IT.

Q: DO YOU THINK IT WAS THE SAME PERSON WHO FIRED IN THAT APPROXIMATE ONE SECOND OR LESS?

A: I THINK IT WAS MORE THAN HALF A SECOND BETWEEN SHOTS. PROBABLY ALMOST TWO SECONDS BETWEEN THE TIME PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS HIT WITH THE FIRST AND THE TIME I WAS HIT.

Q: THE TARGET WAS SHIFTING ALSO, WASN'T IT?

A: THE TARGET WAS SHIFTING. THE POINT YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, OF COURSE, IS, AS I STATED A MOMENT AGO, IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW AT WHAT POINT EITHER OF US WAS HIT. YOU CAN DETERMINE WITH SOME DEGREE OF CERTAINTY, I THINK, WHEN I REALLY BEGAN TO REACT. LOOKING AT THE FILM (THE SMM MOVIE FILM TAKEN BY A BYSTANDER) IT BECOMES VERY APPARENT IN FRAME 234. IT WAS LESS CERTAIN WHEN THE PRESIDENT BEGAN TO REACT BECAUSE HE WAS BEHIND THE HIGHWAY SIGN. BUT EITHER OF US COULD HAVE BEEN HIT SOME TIME BEFORE THAT. IT DEPENDS ON WHAT THE HUMAN REACTION IS AS TO PRECISELY HOW LONG IT TAKES TO REACT AND WHEN IT BECOMES VISIBLE IN A MOVIE FILM.

Q: CAN YOU ESTIMATE OR RECALL THE TIME SPAN BETWEEN THE FIRST SHOT AND THE THIRD?

A: NOT WITH ANY CERTAINTY THAT WILL BE OF ANY VALUE AT ALL. ONLY THAT THEY WERE ALL VERY RAPID SHOTS.

Q: THE COMMISSION SAYS YOU WERE HIT BY THE FIRST SHOT AND YOU SAY YOU WERE NOT. DOES THAT CAST ANY DOUBT IN YOUR MIND?

A: NO. BASICALLY IT DOES NOT. WE DISAGREE ON THAT ONE POINT. THE COMMISSION HEARD ABOUT TEN MILLION WORDS OF TESTIMONY AND CAME FORTH WITH A NUMBER OF FINDINGS AND I DON'T KNOW WHY DISAGREEMENT ON ONE POINT DESTROYS THE VALUE OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED. I MUST SAY I AM NOT GOING TO PUT MYSELF IN A POSITION AS I AM CONCERNED. I MUST SAY I AM NOT GOING TO PUT MYSELF IN A POSITION AS I AM CONCERNED. I MUST SAY I AM NOT GOING TO PUT MYSELF IN A POSITION OF BEING INFALLIBLE. WHEN I SAY I AM NOT INFALLIBLE, LET ME MAKE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT I AM NOT GOING TO CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT WHAT I BELIEVE. NEVERTHELESS, THEY DO HAVE EVIDENCE AND THEY DO HAVE OTHER FACTS THAT THEY HAVE CONSIDERED IN FORMING THEIR OPINION ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED. THE PARTICULAR LAWYER WHOSE ACCOUNT I HAVE READ MAKES A FAIRLY PLAUSIBLE STORY, TALKING ABOUT THE TREE, THE TIME FACTOR, ETC. AGAIN, WE MAY BOTH BE WRONG. THE COMMISSION SAYS PRESIDENT KENNEDY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HIT AS EARLY, POSSIBLY, AS HE WAS HIT. I DON'T THINK I WAS HIT UNTIL FRAME 231 OR 232... I ASSURE YOU I CANNOT SAY WITH ANY DEGREE OF CERTAINTY PRECISELY AT WHAT POINT I WAS HIT. I DON'T KNOW.

EB41DN

Q: DID YOU BELIEVE THE BULLET ON THE STRETCHER WAS THE BULLET THAT HIT PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

A: FRANKLY I AM NOT QUALIFIED TO COMMENT BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW...

Q: IS PART OF THE BULLET THAT HIT YOU STILL IN YOUR BODY?

A: THE DOCTORS TOLD ME, AS I RECALL, THERE IS STILL A SMALL FRAGMENT IN MY LEFT LEG WHICH WAS FAIRLY DEEPLY EMBEDDED AND THEY DIDN'T ATTEMPT TO GET IT OUT, THAT IT DIDN'T CAUSE ANY HARM TO ME WHATEVER. IT CAUSES NO DISCOMFORT...

Q: DO YOU FEEL THERE IS ANY NEED WHATEVER FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION, OFFICIAL OR NON-OFFICIAL? WOULD IT SERVE ANY PURPOSE AT ALL?

A: NONE WHATEVER UNLESS AND UNTIL THERE IS SOME NEW EVIDENCE OR SIGNIFICANT FACT THAT IS DISCOVERED, I SEE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION OR RE-OPENING THE INVESTIGATION BY THE WARREN COMMISSION OR ANYONE ELSE.

Q: YOU SAID IN YOUR STATEMENT THAT RECENT WRITINGS WERE MOTIVATED, SOME OF THEM, BY POLITICAL OVERTONES.

A: I AM GOING TO LEAVE THAT STATEMENT TO STAND JUST AS IT IS FOR PRESENT. I AM NOT GOING TO ELABORATE ON IT AT ALL...

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE LIFE ARTICLE?

A: I WOULD NOT INCLUDE THAT.

Q: IS THE MATTER OF WHICH SHOT HIT YOU THE ONLY POINT OF DIS-
AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMISSION?

A: BASICALLY, YES...

Q: WHY IS THAT?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I SUPPOSE I MAY BE LIKE THEIR SISTER PUBLICATION
TIME. I JUST DON'T THINK THERE IS ANY NECESSITY FOR IT. LIFE
THINKS THERE IS. TIME THINKS THERE ISN'T. I DON'T SEE ANY NEW
EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, AND I THINK IT DOES NO ONE ANY GOOD, SERVES NO
USEFUL PURPOSE, TO KEEP BANDYING THESE THINGS AROUND. OBVIOUSLY,
I THINK THERE ARE CERTAIN FACTS ABOUT THIS ASSASSINATION WE MAY NEVER
KNOW...

H742DN

Q: YOU SAID YOU FELT THERE WAS TOO MUCH BANDYING ABOUT. WHAT
PROMPTED YOU TO COME OUT WITH YOUR STATEMENTS FOR LIFE?

A: I AGREED TO VIEW THE FILMS AGAIN WITH RESPECT TO THE TIME OF
THE FIRST AND SECOND SHOT, AND THAT IS ALL.

Q: DO YOU THINK YOU ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING NEW?

A: I WILL SAY WHAT I SAID TO LIFE A NUMBER OF TIMES...THERE IS
NOTHING NEW SO FAR AS I AM CONCERNED AND I ASSUME I WILL BE ASKED
ABOUT IT AGAIN AND IF I AM I WILL TELL THEM EXACTLY THE SAME
THING.

Q: DO YOU FEEL THE ONE BULLET THEORY WAS PUT TOGETHER TO FIT THE
REST OF THE FACTS?

A: I WOULDN'T PRESUME AND TRY TO READ SOMEONE ELSE'S MIND ABOUT
WHY THE ONE-BULLET THEORY WAS DEVELOPED. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO
THAT.

Q: MUCH OF THE TESTIMONY FOR THE COMMISSION WAS TAKEN BY ARLEN
SPECTER. WAS HE THE GENTLEMAN WHO TOOK YOUR TESTIMONY?

A: I DON'T RECALL. I AM SURE HE WAS THERE. NEARLY ALL THE MEMBERS
OF THE COMMISSION WERE THERE, BUT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF STAFF PEOPLE
THERE.

Q: WHEN THEY TOOK YOUR TESTIMONY, HAD THEY ALREADY ARRIVED AT THIS
THEORY?

A: I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT.

Q: THIS BUSINESS ABOUT HOW MANY ASSASSINS IS ONE OF THE KEY
THINGS. YOU SAID YOU TESTIFIED FOR THE COMMISSION YOU BELIEVED
AT THE TIME OF THE SHOTS THERE WERE TWO OR THREE BECAUSE OF THE
RAPIDITY. WOULD YOU TELL SPECIFICALLY WHY NOW YOU THINK THERE
WAS ONLY ONE.

A: BECAUSE OF TESTIMONY AND BECAUSE I HAVE CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN MEMBERS OF THE WARREN COMMISSION...THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT WENT THROUGH MY MIND. IT IS NO EVIDENCE. IT WAS NOTHING BUT A FLEETING THOUGHT.

Q: ARE YOU CERTAIN IN YOUR OWN MIND AS TO THE DIRECTION OF THE SHOTS:

A: -BSOLUTELY. OVER THE RIGHT SHOULDER, FROM THE BACK, FROM BEHIND US...

Q: DID THE WARREN COMMISSION EVER SAY IF THE FIRST SHOT EVER HIT OR MISSED, CONCLUSIVELY?

A: I CAN'T ANSWER THAT WITH ANY DEGREE OF CERTAINTY. I DIDN'T RECALL WHAT THE COMMISSION SAID ABOUT THE FIRST SHOT. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY SAID IT HIT.

EB43DN

(THERE WERE SEVERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AT THIS POINT ON HOW THE GOVERNOR FELT, HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION, AND ABOUT THE METAL STILL IN HIS LEG.)

Q: IS THERE ANY WAY TO ESTIMATE THE SIZE OF THE FRAGMENT?

A: NO. I GATHER IT WAS A VERY, VERY SMALL FRAGMENT. AGAIN LET ME SAY IF THIS GETS TO BE A MATTER OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE WE BETTER CHECK IT OUT. WHAT I'M TELL YOU, IS, IN ALL CANDOR, WHAT DOCTORS TOLD ME THREE YEARS AGO, AND I HAVE PAID NO ATTENTION TO IT SINCE THEN...

Q: THAT IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE UNMARKED BULLET, THE BULLET THAT HIT PRESIDENT KENNEDY, IS IT?

A: I DON'T KNOW IF IT IS COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE. I HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO BECOME EXPERT ON WHERE THIS BULLET CAME FROM ON THE STRETCHER. THIS MAY RESULT IN SOME OF THE CONFUSION SURROUNDING THESE THINGS BECAUSE YOU TRY TO TIE DOWN EVERY SINGLE DETAIL, AND FRANKLY, NO ONE KNOWS DEFINITELY HOW THAT BULLET GOT ON THE STRETCHER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT BULLET IT WAS. I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING.

Q: HAVE YOU AND THE PRESIDENT DISCUSSED THE WARREN COMMISSION?

A: NOT PARTICULARLY.

Q: HOW ABOUT IN CONVERSATION?

A: OH, YES, OVER THE YEARS, I WOULD SAY IN A VERY CASUAL SORT OF WAY, BUT SO FAR AS SITTING DOWN AND DISCUSSING THE WARREN COMMISSION WITH HIM, I HAVE NEVER DONE SO.

(END TRANSCRIPT)

RW/JS713PCS

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