

Mrs. John F. Kennedy's Testimony

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 23—Following is the text of testimony by Mrs. John F. Kennedy at her home last June 5 before the President's Commission on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren:

Present was Chief Justice Earl Warren, chairman. Also present were J. Lee Rankin, general counsel; and Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General of the United States.

The chairman. The commission will be in order. Mrs. Kennedy, the commission would just like to have you say in your own words, in your own way, what happened at the time of the assassination of the President. Mr. Rankin will ask you a few questions, just from the time you left the airport until the time you started for the hospital. And we want it to be brief. We want it to be in your own words and want you to say anything that you feel is appropriate to that occasion.

Would you be sworn, please, Mrs. Kennedy?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you give before the commission will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Mrs. Kennedy. I do.

The chairman. Would you be seated.

The Questioning Begins

Mr. Rankin. State your name for the record. Mrs. Kennedy. Jacqueline Kennedy.

Q. And you are the widow of the former President Kennedy? A. That is right.

Q. You live here in Washington? A. Yes.

Q. Can you go back to the time that you came to Love Field on Nov. 22 and describe what happened there after you landed in the plane?

A. We got off the plane. The then Vice President and Mrs. Johnson were there. They gave us flowers. And then the car was waiting, but there was a big crowd there, all yelling, with banners and everything. And we went to shake hands with them. It was a very hot day. And you went all along a line. I tried to stay close to my husband and lots of times you get pushed away, you know, people leaning over and pulling your hand. They were very friendly.

And, finally, I don't know how we got back to the car. I think Congressman [Albert] Thomas somehow was helping me. There was lots of confusion. Describes Seating in Car

Q. Then you did get into the car. And you sat on the left side of the car, did you, and your husband on your right? A. Yes.

Q. And was Mrs. Connally— A. In front of me.

Q. And Governor Connally to your right in the jump seat? A. Yes.

Q. And Mrs. Connally was in the jump seat? A. Yes.

Q. And then did you start off on the parade route? A. Yes.

Q. And were there many people along the route that you waved to? A. Yes. It was rather scattered going in. Once there was a crowd of people

with a sign saying something like "President Kennedy, please get out and shake our hands, our neighbors said you wouldn't."

Q. Did you? A. And he stopped and got out. That was, you know, like a little suburb and there were not many crowds. But then the crowds got bigger as you went in.

Q. As you got into the main street of Dallas were there very large crowds on all the streets? A. Yes.

Q. And you waved to them and proceeded down the street with the motorcade? A. Yes. And in the motorcade, you know, I usually would be waving mostly to the left side and he was waving mostly to the right, which is one reason you are not looking at each other very much. And it was terribly hot. Just blinding all of us.

Incident Is Recalled

Q. Now, do you remember as you turned off of the main street onto Houston Street? A. I don't know the name of the street.

Q. That is that one block before you get to the [Texas School Book] Depository building. A. Well, I remember whenever it was, Mrs. Connally said, "We will soon be there." We could see a tunnel in front of us. Everything was really slow then. And I remember thinking it would be cool under that tunnel.

Q. And then do you remember as you turned off of Houston onto Elm right by the Depository building? A. Well, I don't know the names of the streets, but I suppose right by the Depository is what you are talking about?

Q. Yes that is the street that sort of curves as you go down under the underpass. A. Yes, well, that is when she said to President Kennedy, "You certainly can't say that the people of Dallas haven't given you a nice welcome."

Q. What did he say? A. I think he said — I don't know if I remember it or I have read it— No, you certainly can't, or something. And you know then the car was very slow and there weren't very many people around.

And then—do you want me to tell you what happened?

Noise Muffled Shots

Q. Yes, if you would, please. A. You know, there is always noise in a motorcade and there are always motorcycles besides us, a lot of them backfiring. So I was looking to the left. I guess there was a noise, but it didn't seem like any different noise really because there is so much noise, motorcycles and things. But then suddenly Governor Connally was yelling, "Oh, no, no, no."

Q. Did he turn toward you? A. No, I was looking this way, to the left, and I head

these terrible noises. You know. And my husband never made any sound. So I turned to the right. And all I remember is seeing my husband, he had this sort of quizzical look on his face, and his hand was up, it must have been his left hand. And just as I turned and looked at him, I could see a piece of his skull and I remember it was flesh colored. I remember thinking he just looked as if he had a slight headache. And I just remember seeing that. No blood or anything.

And then he sort of did this [indicating] put his hand to his forehead and fell in my lap. And then I just remember falling on him and saying, "Oh, no, no, no," I mean, "Oh, my God, they have shot my husband." And "I love you, Jack," I remember I was shouting. And just being down in the car with his head in my lap. And it just seemed an eternity.

You know, then, there were pictures later on of me climbing out the back. But I don't remember that at all.

Doesn't Remember Climbing

Q. Do you remember Mr. Hill [Secret Service agent] coming to try to help on the car?

A. I don't remember anything. I was just down like that. And finally I remember a voice behind me, or something, and then I remember the people in the front seat, or somebody, finally knew something was wrong, and a voice yelling, which must have been Mr. Hill, "Get to the hospital," or maybe it was Mr. Kellerman [Secret Service agent], in the front seat. But someone yelling. I was just down and holding him. (Reference to wounds deleted.)

Q. Do you have any recollection of whether there were one or more shots?

A. Well, there must have been two because the one that made me turn around was Governor Connally yelling. And it used to confuse me because first I remembered there were three and I used to think my husband didn't make any sound when he was shot. And Governor Connally screamed. And then I read the other day that it was the same shot that hit them both.

'Could Have Pulled Him Down'

But I used to think if I only had been looking to the right I would have seen the first shot hit him, then I could have pulled him down, and then the second shot would not have hit him. But I heard Governor Connally yelling and that made me turn around, and as I turned to the right my husband was doing this [indicating with hand at neck]. He was receiving a bullet. And those are the only two I remember.

And I read there was a third shot. But I don't know. Just those two.

Q. Do you have any recollection generally of the speed that you were going, not any precise amount. A. We were really slowing turning the corner. And there were very few people.

Confusion Is Cited

Q. And did you stop at any time after the shots, or proceed about the same way? A. I don't know, because—I don't think we stopped. But there was such

confusion. And I was down in the car and everyone was yelling to get to the hospital and you could hear them on the radio, and then suddenly I remember a sensation of enormous speed, which must have been when we took off.

Q. And then from there you proceeded as rapidly as possible to the hospital, is that right? A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall anyone saying anything else during the time of the shooting? A. No, there weren't any words. There was just Governor Connally's. And then I suppose Mrs. Connally was sort of crying and covering her husband. But I don't remember any words. And there was a big windshield between — you know — I think. Isn't there?

Q. Between the seats. A. So you know, those poor men in the front, you couldn't hear them.

Mr. Rankin. Can you think of anything more?

The chairman. No, I think not, I think that is the story and that is what we came for.

We thank you very much, Mrs. Kennedy.

Mr. Rankin. I would just like to ask if you recall Special Agent Kellerman saying anything to you as you came down the street after you turned that corner that you referred to.

Mrs. Kennedy. You mean before the shots?

Q. Yes. A. Well, I don't, because—you know, it is very hard for them to talk. But I do not remember, just as I don't recall climbing out on the back of the car.

A. Yes. You have told us what you remember about the entire period as far as you can recall, have you? A. Yes.

The chairman. Thank you very much, Mrs. Kennedy.