

Part of Testimony by Agent in Car

Following are excerpts from the testimony of Roy H. Kellerman, special agent of the Secret Service, last March 9:

ARLEN SPECTER, an assistant counsel of the commission—What is your current duty station with the Secret Service?

MR. KELLERMAN. My current duty station is assistant special agent in charge of the White House detail.

Q.—How long have you been with the Secret Service?

A.—This is my 23d year.

Q.—What were your specific duties back on Nov. 22 of 1963?

A.—My specific duty, gentlemen, on the 22d of November of 1963, I was in charge of the detail for this trip of President Kennedy, for the trip to Texas in those two days.

Q.—How did you personally make the trip to Texas?

A.—I rode on the President's plane on the entire tour.

Q.—Mr. Kellerman, what were the President's activities immediately before departing from Fort Worth on the morning of Nov. 22?

A.—First he walked from the hotel across the street, spoke to a group that were in a parking lot, with other Congressional people there in Texas. From there he walked right into the hotel and entered the ballroom where a breakfast was held, given to him by the Chamber of Commerce and, I believe, the citizens group in Fort Worth.

From there he returned to his suite because there was time left before his departure for Dallas.

It was up there in the neighborhood of 10 o'clock in the morning that Special Agent Lawson called me from Dallas asking me to verify whether the top should be put on—should remain on the President's car or should be taken off due to the change of weather. It had been raining slightly in Dallas at that time. I said, "One moment and I will check with you one way or the other."

As I said earlier, the weather was clearing in Fort Worth; it was going to be a nice day. I asked Mr. Kenneth O'Donnell, who is President Kennedy's appointment secretary:

"Mr. O'Donnell," I said, "the weather; it is slightly raining in Dallas, predictions of clearing up. Do you desire to have the bubbletop on the President's car or do you, or would you desire to have it removed for this parade over to the Trade Mart?"

His instructions to me were, "If the weather is clear and it is not raining, have that bubbletop off," and that is exactly what I relayed to Mr. Lawson.

In President's Car

Q.—What automobile came behind the lead automobile [in Kennedy's motorcade in Dallas]?

A.—Describe the occupants of that car, indicating their positions, if you can, please.

A.—Yes. The President—President Kennedy sat on the right rear seat. Next to him on the left seat was Mrs. Kennedy. On the right jump seat in front of President Kennedy was Governor Connally. On the left jump seat in front of Mrs. Kennedy was Mrs. Connally. I sat on

the right passenger seat of the driver's seat, and Special Agent William Greer drove the vehicle.

Q.—Were there any unusual occurrences en route from Love Field [Dallas] until, say, you got to the downtown area of Dallas, Tex.?

A.—As we were on the outskirts of this town and apparently reaching a crowded area there were a group of youngsters on the right side of the car curb-line-wise, that had a large sign, oh, perhaps

the width of the two windows there, that said, "Please, Mr. President, stop and shake our hands," and he saw this and he called to the driver and said, "Stop," he said, "call these people over and I will shake their hands," which we did.

The entire motorcade stopped. I got out of the car and stood alongside of it while these people were right up on me. The agents who were on the follow-up car, all around it. And then after a few seconds he said, "All right; let's travel on."

Q.—You say the agents in the followup car moved up at the stopping? A.—Always, sir.

Q.—Specifically, what did they do on that occasion? A.—They crowded right in between the President, the car, and the people.

Description of Scene

Q.—As you turned left onto Elm Street, will you describe what was on your right? A.—As we turned left onto Elm Street and left this building that we are speaking of here—

Q.—Is that the Texas School Book Depository Building? A.—Yes, then your area became clear.

Q.—On the right? A.—On the right, sir. This was an open field area with a hill. Now, there were, if I recall correctly, just at the brink of the hill, right beyond this building in question, there was a small white—how can I describe it?

Q.—A little park area? A.—A little park area; that is right. And beyond it it was all open.

Q.—What was on your left at about that time as you proceeded down Elm Street?

A.—Right. As we turned left on Elm Street off Houston, this, too, was a little plaza area, and kind of a triangular thing where the street was on the opposite side; this is an apparently one-way street, and directly to our left as we turned you had to view, this looked like a little one-story plaza building or structure.

Q.—To complete the scene, as you looked ahead of you down Elm Street, what, if anything, did you see immediately in front of you?

A.—Yes. First thing that I saw was that the road was going to turn, and then a little further ahead we had a viaduct which we were going under.

Q.—Do you know what name the Dallas Texans give to that viaduct? A.—No; I really don't.

Q.—Have you heard it described since as the triple overpass? A.—No; I haven't.

Q.—And describe the composition of the crowds at that time.

A.—As we turned north on to Houston Street, this was primarily the end of the crowd in Dallas, Tex.; in the downtown section, there were still a few on the sidewalk until we got to Elm Street.

As we turned in a northerly direction to Elm Street, which would be on our left, then the crowds just diminished. They were spotty, standing on the grassy plot. They were not on the side of the street. In fact, there were just a matter of a handful, that was all, and we were through it.

Q.—All right. Now, as you turned left off Houston onto Elm, what is your best estimate of the speed of the President's automobile at that time?

A.—As we turned onto Elm Street and the crowd, we were through the section of Dallas; we might have had—the driver picked it up because we were all through. Purely a guess, we could have been going at the most 25.

Q.—What would your estimate, your minimum estimate, of the speed be?

A.—Fifteen.

Q.—As you turned left onto Elm Street, how far were you behind the lead car at that point? A.—I am going to say the same; three to five car lengths, but I can, to go a little further, I can see this car ahead of me. He is not running away from us.

Q.—How about the pilot car; was that car in sight? A.—No; that I didn't see; I didn't see it.

Q.—Do you know from your personal observation at the time you turned left onto Elm Street how far the President's follow-up car was behind you at that point? A.—Not from personal observation.

Q.—All right. Now, describe what occurred as you proceeded down Elm Street after turning off of Houston.

A.—As we turned off Houston onto Elm and made the short little dip to the left going down grade, as I said, we were away from buildings, and were—there was a sign on the side of the road which I don't recall what it was or what it said, but we no more than passed that and you are out in the open, and there is a report like a fire-cracker, pop.

And I turned my head to the right because whatever this noise was I was sure that it came from the right and perhaps into the rear, and as I turned my head to the right to view whatever it was or see whatever it was, I heard a voice from the back seat and I firmly believe it was the President's, "My God, I am hit," and I turn around and he has got his hands up here like this.

Q.—Indicating right hand up toward his neck? A.—That is right, sir. In fact, both hands were up in that direction.

SENATOR JOHN SHERMAN COOPER, a commission member—Which side of his neck?

MR. KELLERMAN. Beg pardon?

Q.—Which side of his neck? A.—Both hands were up, sir; this one is like this here and here we are with the hands—

MR. SPECTER. Indicating the left hand is up above the head.

MR. KELLERMAN. In the collar section.

'Let's Get Out of Here'

Q.—As you are positioning yourself in the witness chair, your right hand is up with the finger at the ear level as if clutching from the right of the head; would that be an accurate description of the position you pictured there?

A.—Yes. Good. There was enough for me to verify that the man was hit. So, in the same motion I come right back—and grabbed the speaker and said to the driver, "Let's get out of here; we are hit," and grabbed the mike and I said, "Lawson, this is Kellerman,"—this is Lawson, who is in the front car. "We are hit; get us to the hospital immediately."

Now, in the seconds that I talked just now, a flurry of shells come into the car. I then looked back and this time Mr. Hill [a Secret Service agent], who was riding on the left front bumper of our followup car, was on the back trunk of that car; the President was sideways down into the back seat.

Q.—Indicating on his left side.

A.—Right; just like I am here.

Q.—You mean, correct, left side? A.—Correct; yes, sir. Governor Connally by that time is lying flat backwards into her lap—Mrs. Connally—and she was lying flat over him.

Q.—Who was lying flat over him? A.—Mrs. Connally was lying flat over the Governor.

Q.—You say that you turned to your right immediately after you heard a shot? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—What was the reason for your reacting to your right? A.—That was the direction that I heard this noise, pop.

Q.—Do you have a reaction as to the height from which the noise came? A.—No; honestly, I do not.

REPRESENTATIVE GERALD R. FORD, a commission member—Was there any reaction that you noticed on the part of Greer when the noise was noticed by you?

MR. KELLERMAN—You are referring, Mr. Congressman, to the reaction to get this car out of there?

Q.—Yes. A.—Mr. Congressman, I have driven that car many times, and I never cease to be amazed even to this day with the weight of the automobile plus the power that is under the hood; we just literally jumped out of the God-damn road.

Comment to Driver

Q.—As soon as this noise was heard, or as soon as you transmitted this message to Lawson? A.—As soon as I transmitted to the driver first as I went to Lawson. I just leaned sideways to him and said, "Let's get out of here. We are hit."

Q.—That comment was made to Greer; not to Lawson? A.—Yes, sir; that is right.

Q.—And the subsequent message was to Lawson? A.—Correct. That is right.

MR. SPECTER—With relationship to that first noise that you have described, when did you hear the voice?

MR. KELLERMAN—His voice?

Q.—We will start with his voice. A.—OK. From the noise of which I was in the process of turning to determine where it was or what it was, it carried on right then. Why I am so positive, gentlemen, that it was his voice — there is only one man in that back seat that was from Boston, and the accents carried very clearly.

Q.—Well, had you become familiar with the President's voice prior to that day? A.—Yes; very much so.

Q.—Well, going back to the precise time that you heard the President say, "My God, I am hit," do you recollect whether she said anything at that time? A.—No.

Timing of Shots

Q.—Now, in your prior testimony you described a flurry of shells into the car. How many shots did you hear after the first noise which you described as sounding like a firecracker?

A.—Mr. Specter, these shells came in all together.

Q.—Are you able to say how many you heard? A.—I am going to say two, and it was like a double bang—bang, bang.

Q.—You mean now two shots in addition to the first noise?

A.—Yes, sir; yes, sir; at least.

Q.—What is your best estimate of the time, in seconds, from the first noise sounding like a firecracker until the second noise which you heard?

A.—This was instantaneous.

Q.—No; let me repeat the question so I am sure you understand it. From the time you first hear the noise coming to your right rear, which you described as sounding like a firecracker, until you hear the flurry of shots?

A.—This was about how long it took, sire. As I am viewing, trying to determine this noise, I turned to my right and I heard the voice and I came back and I verify it and speak to the driver, grab the mike, these shots come it.

Q.—Well, you have described it as 3 or 4 seconds from the time— A.—No more.

Q.—From the time of the first noise—wait a minute—until you gave the instruction to Mr. Greer and then as you made the statement to Special Agent Lawson over the microphone that was an instantaneous timespan as you have described it. A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—How soon thereafter did the flurry of shots come? A.—They came in, Mr. Specter, while I am delivering that radio message.

Q.—To Mr. Lawson. All right. Was there any timespan which you could discern between the first and second shots and what you have described as the flurry? A.—I will estimate 5 seconds, if that.

Q.—All right. Then precisely what was your next movement after completing the delivery of that message to Lawson? A.—When I completed the delivery of those instructions to Lawson, I just hung up the receiver and looked back.

Q.—To your right this time—to your left; pardon me. A.—To my left; that is right. This is when I first viewed Mr. Hill, who was on the back of the—

Q.—Precisely where was he in that instant? A.—Lying right across the trunk of the

Q.—Now, did President Kennedy say anything beside, "My God, I am hit." A.—That is the last words he said sir.

Q.—Did Mrs. Kennedy say anything at that specific time?

A.—Mr. Specter, there was an awful lot of confusion in that back seat. She did a lot of talking which I can't recall all the phrases.

Q.—Well, pinpoint—

A.—But after the flurry of shots, I recall her saying, "What are they doing to you?" Now again, of course, my comparison of the voice of her speech—certainly, I have heard it many times, and in the car there was conversation she was carrying on through shock, I am sure.

car with Mrs. Kennedy on the left rear, Mr. Hill's head was right up in back of her.

Q.—When you describe the left rear you mean as the car was facing? A.—As the car is traveling, sir; yes, sir. He was lying across the trunk of this car, feet on this side.

Q.—What was the position of Mrs. Kennedy's body at that time? A.—She was sitting up in the corner of this back seat, like this.

Q.—So that she was on the buttocks area of her body at that time? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—And what movement, if any, did you observe Mrs. Kennedy make at that time? A.—I never did see Mrs. Kennedy leave that back seat, sir.

Q.—Where did you look next; what did you observe following that? A.—Then I observed how the President was lying, which was—he was—flat in the seat in this direction.

Q.—On his left-hand side?

A.—Yes, sir. Governor Connally was lying straight on his back with Mrs. Connally over him about halfway.

Q.—Mr. Kellerman, you said earlier that there were at least two additional shots. Is there any area in your mind or possibility, as you recollect that situation, that there could have been more than two shots, or are you able to say with any certainty?

A.—I am going to say that I have, from the firecracker report and the two other shots that I know, those were three shots. But, Mr. Specter, if President Kennedy had from all reports four wounds, Governor Connally three, there have got to be more than three shots, gentlemen.

Q.—Now, you referred to four wounds, Mr. Kellerman, realizing, of course, your characterization is only lay opinion. A.—Very true.

Q.—Would you tell us which wounds you made reference to by that statement, please?

A.—All right. Can I keep the train going from the time we got to the hospital?

Hospital Scene

Q.—Yes, sir; do it in your own way just as you please.

A.—Fine. As we arrived at the hospital I immediately got out of the car. Our followup car is in back of us, as you will recall. I yelled to the agents, "Get in"—"Go get us two stretchers on wheels."

In the meantime in a matter of seconds—I don't know how they got out so fast—I turned right around to the back door and opened it. By this time Mrs. Connally had raised up, and the Governor is lying in her lap, face up.

His eyes are open and he is looking at me, and I am fairly sure he is alive. By this time I noticed the two stretchers coming out of the emergency room, and I said to the Governor, I said, "Governor, don't worry; everything is going to be all right."

And he nodded his head, which I was fairly convinced that that man was alive.

By this time the stretcher is there. I get inside on one side of him, and Special Agent Hill on the other. Somebody is holding his feet, and we remove the Governor and put him on the stretcher and they take him in.

We then get in and help Mrs. Connally out. Our next move is to get Mrs. Kennedy off from the seat, which was a little difficult, but she was removed. Then Mr. Hill removed his coat and laid it over the President's face and shoulder.

He and I among two other people — I don't know — we lifted up the President and put him on a stretcher and followed him right into the emergency room.

Gentlemen, this emergency room is a, it looks like a, check-erboard; it has a walkway down the center and a cross-way and there are rooms on each side.

President Kennedy was put into the one on the right, Governor Connally across on the left. And as we pushed the wheelchair in — we pushed the stretcher inside, the medical people just seemed to form right in, right there, and I walked around him and I wanted to look at this man's face, they had him face up.

Q.—Proceed. A.—Having all the medical people in there, my business is left in their hands. So I left. Mrs. Kennedy, incidentally, was still in there.

Q.—In where, sir?

A.—In the emergency room with him. Which after a few minutes they convinced her to leave, and she sat outside the room while they were working over the President.

I walked into this center area of this emergency room—and I am looking for a telephone—which there is a little doctor's office and I walked inside, and I am alone at that time, except one medic who was in there.

There are two phones and I said, "Can I use either one of these phones to get outside?" and he said, "Yes; just pick one up."

By this time Mr. Lawson enters and also Mr. Hill. I asked Mr. Lawson for the telephone number of the Dallas White House switchboard. He immediately has it and I said to Mr. Hill, "Will you dial it, please?"

By that time a medic comes into the room from President Kennedy's section and he asks if anybody knows the blood type of the President—President Kennedy. We all carry it. I produce mine, and that is what I believe they used. I am not sure.

By this time the connection is made with the White House operator in Dallas, and I took the phone, identified myself, and I said, "Give me Washington. Please don't pull this line; let's leave it open."

Disagrees on Time

I got the Washington operator and I said, identified myself, and I said, "Give me Mr. Behn."

Mr. Behn was in the office at the time, and I said—his name is Gerald Behn—and I said, "Gerry, we have had an incident in Dallas. The President, the Governor have been shot. We are in the emergency room of the Parkland Memorial Hospital." I said, "Mark down the time."

Of course, since that time until now we have disagreed on about 3 minutes. I said it is 12:38, which would be 1:38 Dallas time. I am sorry—Washington time.

Q.—Was that at the time you were talking to Mr. Behn? A.

—To Mr. Behn; yes, sir.

Q.—And your version is that it is 12:38 Dallas time? A.—12:38. He said it was 12:41; he told me the next day.

Q.—May I interrupt you there for you to tell us how long after you arrived at the hospital did you make that telephone call to Mr. Behn, to the best of your recollection? A.—Three to five minutes.

SENATOR COOPER. What was the name of the special agent driving the car—the President's car?

MR. KELLERMAN. William Greer.

Q.—He was the one to whom you spoke when you heard the report? A.—Yes, sir.

Q.—Has he ever expressed any opinion to you as to the number of shots that were fired? A.—No, sir. I think we are all of the opinion, Senator, that we know of three.

MR. SPECTER. Mr. Kellerman there is a report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation designated "Bureau File No. 105"—I believe there is an "S," although it is somewhat illegible on my copy—"S2555, report of Special Agent Robert P. Gemberling," dated December 10, 1963, which refers to an interview of you by Special Agent Francis X. O'Neill, Jr., and James W. Sibert, in which the following is set forth:

"He"—and this obviously refers to you—"advised that he heard a shot and immediately turned around looking past Governor Connally who was seated directly in back of him, to the President. He observed the President slumped forward and heard him say 'get me to a hospital.' Mr. Kellerman then heard Mrs. Kennedy say, 'Oh, no,' as the President leaned toward her."

That is the end of the quotation. My question is: Did you hear him; did you hear President Kennedy say "Get me to a hospital?"

MR. KELLERMAN—No, sir. Q.—Did you hear Mrs. Kennedy say, "Oh, no"? A.—No, sir.

Q.—Do you have any knowledge or explanation as to why you would have been so quoted in the report of the F.B.I.?

A.—When these two gentlemen talked to me, I don't know where they got those quotes, because the only two things that I told them, they were interested in what I heard from the people in the back seat, and one said "my God, I have been hit," which was President Kennedy, and Mrs. Kennedy said, "What are they doing to you?"

Q.—You were interviewed, however, by Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Sibert on Nov. 22, 1963? A.—November what?

Q.—Nov. 22. A.—No. Nov. 22 is when they were in the morgue with me. They interviewed me in the office that—it was around the 27th. This was after the funeral.

Talks With Johnson

Q.—You have described in answers to previous questions what occurred upon the arrival at Parkland of the President's automobile. What action, if any, did you take immediately after President Kennedy and Governor Connally were taken into the hospital?

A.—I believe we had got to the point where I had made this phone call to Washington to alert these people back here of the incident.

Q.—And proceeding from that point?

A.—From this point, the agents who were in this followup car had joined me in the emergency room. They took up security posts at entrance into the emergency room to keep it clear of all people except medical people.

The only people allowed in there would be workers. After this was done, Special Agent Kinney came to me and asked permission to remove the President's car and our followup car to the airport, to load it aboard this aircraft for shipment to Washington, and I said, "Yes."

At that time the next move was Special Agent Warren Taylor, who was assigned to the then Vice President Johnson, came to me and he said, "Mr. Johnson wants to talk to you."

So, I followed him into this room that they had the Johnson party in. He asked me the condition of President Kennedy, which I told him that President Kennedy is still in the emergency room, his condition is serious. He then said, "You let me know of any developments."

I then returned to the emergency room. By that time another shift of agents, who were at the Trade Mart on duty for prior to our arrival, reported into the emergency room. This is what is called as our afternoon shift, the 4 to 12.

Mr. Roberts, whose group was on the followup car in the motorcade through Dallas, was the 8-to-4 shift. The 4-to-12 shift then was under the supervision of Mr. Stewart Stout.

I then instructed Mr. Roberts to take his shift, which were the day people, and join Special Agent Rufus Youngblood and stay with Vice President Johnson.

Q.—How many agents were they to take with them? A.—They took the entire followup car, which would mean that they had Roberts, Ready, Bennett, McIntyre; those four.

Q.—Do you know where they went or what specifically they did by way of establishing security for Vice President Johnson? A.—No; I really don't.

Casket Obtained

Q.—What was your next activity?

A.—My next move, then, my next part in this was—by this time it was after 1 o'clock—I am trying to pinpoint time—after 1, because Dr. Burkley said that the President had died; it was after 1 o'clock. By this time other people who were in with Mr. Kennedy, such as his staff—I am speaking of Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Powers, I believe Larry O'Brien—through them, and I believe Mr. Hill, they had obtained a casket from one of the funeral people in town.

Q.—Where had Mrs. Kennedy been during this time? A.—Mrs. Kennedy was right outside the door to the emergency room.

Q.—How long, if at all, was she inside the emergency room with President Kennedy?

A.—This I can't truly answer. However, I should say that, as for the casket being brought into the hospital, another gentleman came into this little doctor's room, his name I don't recall, but he represented himself to be from the Health Department or commission, some form.

He said to me, he said, "There has been a homicide here, you won't be able to remove the

body. We will have to take it down there to the mortuary and have an autopsy." I said, "No, we are not."

And he said, "We have a law here whereby you have to comply with it."

With that Dr. Burkley walked in, and I said, "Doctor, this man is from some health unit in town. He tells me we can't remove this body." The doctor became a little enraged; he said, "We are removing it." He said, "This is the President of the United States and there should be some consideration in an event like this."

And I told this gentleman, I said, "You are going to have to come up with something a little stronger than you to give me the law that this body can't be removed."

So, he frantically called everybody he could think of and he hasn't got an answer; nobody is home.

Shortly he leaves this little room and it seems like a few minutes he is back and he has another gentleman with him, and he said, "This is" — the name escapes me—he said, "He is a judge here in Dallas," and he said, "He will tell you whether you can remove this body or not." I said, "It doesn't make any difference. We are going to move it," and I said, "Judge, do you know who I am?"

And he said, "Yes," and I said, "There must be something in your thinking here that we don't have to go through this agony; the family doesn't have to go through this. We will take care of the matter when we get back to Washington."

The poor man looked at me and he said, "I know who you are," and he said, "I can't help you out."

I said, "All right, sir." But then I happened to look to the right and I can see the casket coming on rollers, and I just left the room and let it out through the emergency entrance and we got to the ambulance and put it in, shut the door after Mrs. Kennedy and General McHugh and Clinton Hill in the rear part of the ambulance.

I am looking around for Mr. Greer and I don't spot him directly because I want to get out of here in a hurry, and I recognize Agent Berger and I said, "Berger, you get in the front seat and drive and, Mr. Stout, you get in the middle and I will get on this side," and as we are leaving—Mr. Lawson, I should say, was in a police car that led away from Parkland Memorial Hospital.

As we were leaving a gentleman taps on the driver's window and they roll it down and he says, "I will meet you at the mortuary." "Yes, sir." We went to the airport, gentlemen.

Q.—Who said, "Yes, sir?"

I did, sir. We went to the airport. In the meantime, Mr. Johnson had taken to the airplane. They had secured the airport; nobody was there.

They had removed seats off the rear part of the plane so we could put the body and casket in it. As we got to the airport the ramp was there; we opened the door and we moved the casket out and walked it right up to the plane.

Q.—Was there any further difficulty of any sort— A.—No.