

mismanagement in the General Services Administration.* The appointment was an impulsive one—even top aides were surprised to read it in *The Washington Post*—but Carter was known to be impatient with the pace of the inquiry. He met last week with GSA director Jay Solomon and assistant Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti, urging them to prosecute “bigger fish.” After hearing their complaints that the scandal was too widespread to clean up quickly, Carter decided to install Kirbo as an adviser to Solomon. “He’s the kind of guy who needs a lot of hand-holding,” says one Carter aide of Solomon. Kirbo, however, will not do any investigating himself, and Attorney General Griffin Bell says he will not be privy to grand-jury testimony.

Even the GSA scandal had its useful side, pointing up the Administration at its most forceful. And Carter won a totally unexpected legislative victory on the issue of oil-import fees. The Senate had already passed an amendment canceling the President’s power to tax imported oil, but last week the House rejected a similar amendment—with almost no lobbying by the Administration because it didn’t know the measure was being voted on until the night before. That victory, together with the others, led Moore to proclaim that, “We flat have got it together now.” Other aides cautioned against euphoria, and House Speaker Thomas P. O’Neill gently pointed out that Carter “had nowhere to go but up.” Still, no one denied that, for the moment at least, things did seem to be going the President’s way.

—SUSAN FRAKER with ELEANOR CLIFT, LLOYD H. NORMAN and HENRY W. HUBBARD in Washington and THOMAS M. DeFRANK in Thurmont, Md.

*One new charge came out last week: a GSA consultant said that employees are stealing more than \$1 million worth of office equipment a year from GSA warehouses.

JFK: Settling Some Doubts

There it was once again, more chillingly clear than ever, in a frame-by-frame photographic “enhancement” of the old Zapruder film: the smiling, waving President suddenly clutching his throat, the governor’s cheeks strangely puffing out as he slumps toward his wife’s lap, then the President’s skull literally exploding and spewing red and gray tissue over the occupants of his car.

There, too, unmistakably, was the backward-jerking motion of the President’s head that fueled a fifteen-year controversy over whether he was, in fact, hit by a conspiratorial cross fire from front and rear. But the preponderance of evidence in the first round of House committee hearings on John F. Kennedy’s assassination supported the basic finding—if not the investigative thoroughness—of the 1964 Warren Commission report: that the President was shot from behind by a lone rifleman. Beyond that, however, there remained a tangle of nagging questions that seemed, after fifteen years, to have moved past hope of conclusive answers.

In 22 hours of televised hearings last week, the assassination committee listened to chemists, pathologists and ballistics experts explaining such abstruse laboratory science as spectrography and neutron analysis of bullet fragments. Their main conclusion: Kennedy was struck by only two bullets fired from the right rear, one of which could have passed through both the President and Gov. John Connally and still emerged in the “near pristine” state in which it was recovered from Connally’s stretcher. The single-bullet theory has been a chief target of conspiracy theorists, and one vigorous dissenter at the hearings, pa-

thologist Cyril Wecht, continued to argue that such a bullet would have had to show more “deformity” at the end of its destructive passage. But even Wecht agreed with his fellow experts that the bullets came from the rear.

Some of the public fascination with the assassination may have subsided. Only about a third of the hearing room’s 256 seats were filled for most of the week, largely by witnesses and their families. Still, the sessions had their riveting moments. Testifying publicly under oath for the first time, an emotional Connally and his wife, Nellie, recalled the moment when the shots rang out in Dallas’s Dealey Plaza. Mrs. Connally told the committee she turned in time to see the President clutch his neck, then saw her husband hit by what she thought was the second bullet. She pulled him down in her lap, believing him dead but thinking, “maybe they wouldn’t hurt him anymore.” Connally said he could see bits of blood and tissue “all over the car,” and his wife remembered hearing Jacqueline Kennedy cry: “They have killed my husband. I have his brains in my hand.” Afterward, said Mrs. Connally, “there was no screaming in that horrible car. It was just a silent, terrible ride.”

Horror Show: Besides a virtual crash course in ballistics, illustrated with a couple of mortar-sized bullet mock-ups, the hearings provided some harrowing exhibits—among them a mannequin draped with the President’s blood-blotted clothes and a series of bizarre film clips demonstrating the explosive effect of rifle bullets on a can of tomatoes, a skull filled with gelatin and a live goat. Significantly, the goat was convulsed by a neuromuscular spasm after being shot

James K.W. Atherton—*The Washington Post*

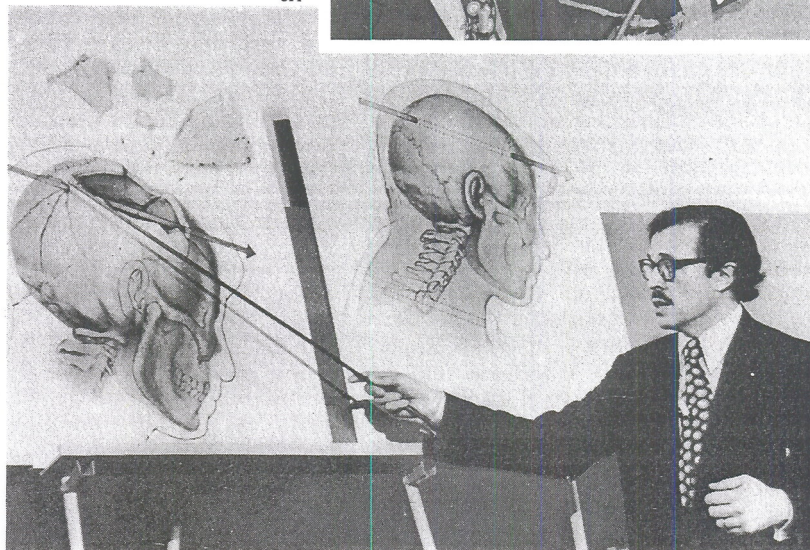


John Ficara—*Newsweek*



Dallas revisited: Sturdivan displays the bullet models, Baden with JFK’s clothes and tracing fatal trajectories, the Connallys recall the start of a ‘terrible ride’

UPI



John Ficara—*Newsweek*



between the eyes in an Army ballistics experiment. Larry Sturdivan, a wound-ballistics expert from the Army's Edgewood Arsenal, hastily assured the members of the committee that such experiments had long since been discontinued. But the important point he scored was that a similar reaction most probably caused the President's head to snap backward, even though he was shot from behind.

A panel of nine pathologists criticized the original autopsy conducted on Kennedy at Bethesda Naval Hospital on the night of the assassination. Panel spokesman Michael M. Baden, chief medical examiner for New York City, said that the President's body was too hurriedly removed from Dallas, which had a qualified medical examiner on hand, and that inexperienced military physicians at Bethesda, working under intense pressure, wrongly located the site of Kennedy's head wound 4 inches below the actual entry point—giving rise to speculations about the possibility of two head wounds and two gunmen. One member of the original autopsy team, retired Navy captain Dr. James Humes, acknowledged to the committee that the team's measurements had been hasty, apologized for destroying his original, blood-stained autopsy notes and said he accepted later findings on the location of the fatal wound.

Puzzles: But the hearings still left loopholes for diehard doubters. Although Connally himself appeared to be backing off his longstanding contention that he was not hit by the same bullet that struck Kennedy, his wife insisted it was a separate shot that wounded him. This week, the committee was expected to release the results of acoustical tests on a tape recording taken from a policeman's radio during the shooting. According to some advance reports, a panel of audio experts will say that their interpretation of the tape indicates the sound of four shots, instead of the three reported by the Warren Commission (one shot missed Kennedy's car entirely).

The most intense interest was apt to center on the last four days of the month-long hearings, when the committee is scheduled to consider various conspiracy theories. Foremost among them: persistent conjectures that the assassination plot was hatched by a vengeful Fidel Castro or by embittered anti-Castro guerrillas. By releasing a store of new evidence and analysis for assassination buffs to pore over, the current inquiry could well stir up some fresh controversy. But the combination of expert testimony—and growing public weariness—may persuade most Americans that the time has come at last to close the books on the Kennedy murder mystery.

—DAVID GELMAN with ELAINE SHANNON in Washington

DISEASES: Fear on Seventh Ave.

On normal workdays, the streets of New York City's garment district are lively canyons bustling with honking trucks, scurrying buyers and sweating rack boys pushing carts loaded with suits, coats and dresses. But last week a tense new atmosphere was evident. Sanitation trucks cruised the side streets off Seventh Avenue flushing pools of stagnant water from the gutters and spraying out disinfectant. Teams of



Douglas Wetzstein—The News World

Inspectors in the garment district: Elusive bacteria

health officers drained water towers on building roofs. Air conditioners fell silent for inspection. And several chilling signs appeared on 35th Street: "The New York City Department of Health has been advised of possible cases of Legionnaire's disease in this building." By the weekend, there were six cases of the mysterious disease, 73 more suspected and two deaths.

The outbreak was as inexplicable and unsettling as all its predecessors since Legionnaire's disease first made headlines in Philadelphia two years ago. "It's like Jaws jumped out of the water and came to the garment district," said Tony Thompson, who works in a restaurant next to the Interstate Dress Carriers, where the first New York case appeared. Since 1976, "cluster" outbreaks of the disease have turned up in several cities, including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Columbus, Ohio, Burlington, Vt., Kingsport, Tenn., and Bloomington, Ind. More recently, there was a scare in Martha's

Vineyard, and one victim died last week in Memphis, where there were five confirmed cases. Two more victims were recovering in Washington, D.C. "Because of the growing ability to identify the organism, we're going to be seeing more cases," predicted Don Berreth of the Federal government's Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Brothers: But while the CDC has had considerable success in identifying the bacterium that causes Legionnaire's disease, no one yet knows how it is transmitted—or how it can be stopped from spreading. In the New York City outbreak, three brothers were the first victims. Carlisle, Gilbert and Joseph Leggette developed the fever, muscle aches and chest congestion that make the disease resemble pneumonia. Joseph and Gilbert recovered; Carlisle did not. "He just got sick and about a week later he was dead," said John Leggette, a fourth brother who warily returned to his own job in the garment district last week. "I'm scared," he said. "But what can you do?"

Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph A. Califano Jr. sent Dr. William Foege, director of the CDC, to New York City, and Mayor Edward Koch appealed for calm. Local health authorities set up a phone bank manned by 40 doctors, who took calls from more than 9,000 worried New Yorkers, separating real symptoms from minor aches and pains. Some workers stayed away from the lofts, and others turned off the air conditioners they feared were a source of the disease. Clothiers worried that out-of-town buyers would stay away just as their spring-fashion season began. But mostly, the garment district bounced back with "Pajama Game" moxie. "I'm only going to die once," said Pericles

Comiris, a sandwich-shop counterman. And newsdealer George Altholtz said the only thing that scared him was getting mugged.

—TOM MATHEWS with ELLIOTT D. LEE in New York

PUBLIC OPINION: The New Pessimism

Americans are traditionally an optimistic lot—but just now they seem seized by bleakness. Since 1971, a biennial sampling of public opinion has shown that a majority of citizens believed the country was not as well off as it had been five years before. Still, most thought the next five years would be better. But in a new survey made in late June and released last week by the Labor Department the majority decided things were bad and likely to get worse. Blacks, people earning less than \$7,000 a year and people over 60 thought the situation would improve.