

House Panel Hears New Evidence Of a Fourth Shot Fired at Kennedy

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 — The House Select Committee on Assassinations has received additional evidence that four shots were fired at President Kennedy in Dallas 15 years ago, reopening the debate over whether he was attacked by one or two assassins, committee sources said today.

According to these sources, two New York acoustics experts have identified the sound of a fourth gunshot on a Dictabelt tape recording made from the transmissions of a police motorcycle radio in Dealey Plaza in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, when the President was shot.

The New York Times prepared for its Aug. 10 issue an article reporting that the committee had found and analyzed such a tape, but a strike by pressmen prevented its publication. However, the article was distributed to clients of The Times's News Service.

First Analysis Called Inconclusive

According to the article, the first analysis, by James Barger of Bolt, Beranek & Newman Inc., an engineering concern in Cambridge, Mass., was inconclusive. Mr. Berger testified at a public hearing on Sept. 11 that he had found only a 50-50 chance that the tape recording carried the sound of a fourth shot.

Subsequently, the committee asked two other acoustical experts, Mark Weiss and a colleague from Queens College in New York, to conduct new tests.

The committee received a report last Monday during a closed session in which the experts said that the tape contained the noise of a fourth shot and that it appeared to come from a grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza.

In September 1964, the Warren Commission released a report concluding that Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots from the Texas Schoolbook Depository Building across the plaza, hitting Mr. Kennedy in the back of the head, and was solely responsible for the assassination.

If a shot came from the grassy knoll, which was in front of the President's car, it would establish that two assassins were involved. It is also clear to House investigators that if there was a second gunman, it is probable that Mr. Kennedy's death was the result of a conspiracy.

Robert F. Blakey, the committee counsel, was quoted as saying that "it could be coincidence that two people fired shots at President Kennedy from opposite directions, but this stretches credulity."

"There always was testimony that one of the four shots fired during the assassination had come from the grassy knoll," he added. "Now we have physical evidence."

The committee announced late today that it would hold a public hearing next week to disclose the evidence formally. It came at a time the panel was winding up its two-year, \$5 million investigation. Although the committee will present the new evidence, it is unlikely that Congress would underwrite any further field investigation.

The tape recording was made inadvertently in 1963, when a dictaphone in the Dallas police headquarters picked up the transmission from a motorcycle in the Kennedy motorcade. Although the existence of the tape was known to the Warren Commission, it was not subjected to sophisticated acoustical analysis that it has been in the last few months.

By sorting out the sounds on the tape and relating them to photographs and other details of the shooting, the Queens College team reportedly was able to tell exactly where the motorcycle was moving when the transmission was made.

Once they made this determination it was easier to both distinguish sounds that were on the recording and to determine their origin. The so-called "fourth" shot was the third in the series of gunshot noises. House investigators speculated that the first two were fired by Oswald, a third shot from the grassy knoll and the last from Oswald.