

Dr. JONES. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is your status on your progress with that, generally?

Dr. JONES. I will finish my formal training in surgery in July of this year, which will complete 5 years of general surgery residency.

Mr. SPECTER. How old are you at the present time, Dr. Jones?

Dr. JONES. Thirty-one.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you discussed this matter with any representatives of the Federal Government prior to today?

Dr. JONES. Yes, I believe the Secret Service has been here on at least two occasions.

Mr. SPECTER. And what did they ask you on those occasions?

Dr. JONES. I think, primarily, to verify that what I had written was true and that I had been one of the first doctors to be in the room with the President.

Mr. SPECTER. Did they ask you anything else other than that?

Dr. JONES. On one occasion they asked if there were any other pieces of paper that had been written on as to the care that had been administered to the President that I had not turned in, and I told them "No."

Mr. SPECTER. And did you and I sit down and talk for a few minutes before we went on the record in this deposition, with me indicating to you the general purpose and the line of questioning, and you setting forth the same information which we have put on the record here today?

Dr. JONES. Yes, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you have anything to add which you think might be helpful to the Commission in any way?

Dr. JONES. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. That concludes the deposition. Thank you very much, Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. All right.

TESTIMONY OF DR. DON TEEL CURTIS

The testimony of Dr. Don Teel Curtis was taken at 9:25 a.m., on March 24, 1964, at Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Arlen Specter, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. SPECTER. Let the record show that present are Dr. Don Curtis and the court reporter, in connection with the deposition proceeding being conducted by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, which is inquiring into all facets of the assassination, including the medical treatment performed for President Kennedy.

Dr. Don Curtis is appearing here this morning in response to a letter requesting him to testify concerning his knowledge of that medical treatment of President Kennedy. With that preliminary statement of the general objective of the Commission and the specific objective of this deposition proceeding, Dr. Curtis, will you rise and raise your right hand, please?

Do you solemnly swear the testimony you give before this Presidential Commission in this deposition proceeding will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Dr. CURTIS. I do.

Mr. SPECTER. Would you state your full name for the record, please?

Dr. CURTIS. Dr. Don Teel, T-e-e-l (spelling) Curtis.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is your occupation or profession?

Dr. CURTIS. Oral surgeon.

Mr. SPECTER. Would you outline briefly your educational background?

Dr. CURTIS. I attended my freshman year at Boulder, Colo., Colorado University, 2 subsequent years of undergraduate work at Texas University, 4 years at Baylor Dental College, and I have been interning here for a year and a half.

Mr. SPECTER. What year did you graduate from Baylor Dental College?

Dr. CURTIS. 1962.

Mr. SPECTER. What is your age at the present time?

Dr. CURTIS. Twenty-six.

Mr. SPECTER. And what has your work consisted of here at Parkland Hospital?

Dr. CURTIS. I have functioned as an intern in oral surgery and also now am a resident this year in oral surgery.

Mr. SPECTER. Are you a licensed dentist?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And when did you obtain that status in the State of Texas?

Dr. CURTIS. I think in August of 1962.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you have occasion to assist in the medical treatment of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Would you outline briefly the circumstances surrounding your call or your joining in the participation in that medical effort?

Dr. CURTIS. I was—do you want me to tell from the time that I got to the emergency room?

Mr. SPECTER. Yes—how did you happen to get to the emergency room?

Dr. CURTIS. I was in our out-patient clinic and saw the President's car, or I saw that it had arrived at the emergency room entrance, and I went over there as a matter of curiosity and was directed into the emergency room and there was directed by a policeman into the room where President Kennedy was.

Mr. SPECTER. About what time was that?

Dr. CURTIS. I don't know—it was shortly after he arrived.

Mr. SPECTER. Approximately how long after he arrived?

Dr. CURTIS. I would say it was within—I would say within a minute after he arrived at the trauma room, although there's no way for me to know that.

Mr. SPECTER. Who was present in the trauma room at that time?

Dr. CURTIS. Dr. Carrico and a nurse, I believe.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you know the identity of the nurse?

Dr. CURTIS. No.

Mr. SPECTER. What did you observe, if anything, as to the condition of President Kennedy at that time?

Dr. CURTIS. I observed that he was in a supine position, with his head extended, and I couldn't see on my arrival—I couldn't see the nature of the wounds, however, Dr. Carrico was standing at the patient's head. Dr. Carrico had just placed an endotracheal tube and I participated in applying the Bird machine respirator into the endotracheal tube for artificial respiration.

Mr. SPECTER. How does it happen that you would participate to that effect in view of the fact that you are an oral surgeon?

Dr. CURTIS. We participate in the emergency room on traumatic injuries of both the face and the entire patient, because the face is hooked onto a patient. We have a tour through anesthesia. We spend time on general anesthesia where we learn management of the patient's airway which makes us, I would say, qualified, for airway management. In our training here at the hospital we many, many times have patients on intravenous infusion and so we are well acquainted with the procedures attendant with the management of I.V. fluids.

Mr. SPECTER. Is there always someone from oral surgery available at the trauma area?

Dr. CURTIS. One of the oral surgeons is on call at the emergency room at all times and we try to stay within a very short distance from the emergency room. We see many patients in the emergency room area.

Mr. SPECTER. Is that for the purpose of rendering aid for someone who would be injured in a way which would call for an oral surgeon?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes—maxillofacial injuries.

Mr. SPECTER. And in addition, you help out in a general way when there is an emergency situation?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, was there anything in President Kennedy's condition which called for the application of your specific specialty?

Dr. CURTIS. No; there wasn't.

Mr. SPECTER. So, you aided in a general way in the treatment of him as an emergency case?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, would you continue to tell me what you have observed with respect to his condition when you first saw him, including what you noted, if anything, with respect to his respiration.

Dr. CURTIS. It is very difficult to say whether or not the President was making a respiratory effort, but I'm not sure that he wasn't making a respiratory effort.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you think that he was making a respiratory effort?

Dr. CURTIS. He could have been, and that's as far as I can go on it.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you observe movements of the chest?

Dr. CURTIS. I thought I did.

Mr. SPECTER. What was his coloring?

Dr. CURTIS. He was pink—he wasn't cyanotic when I saw him.

Mr. SPECTER. And will you explain in lay terms what cyanotic means for the record at this point?

Dr. CURTIS. When the hemoglobin of the blood is reduced, it turns a blue color and the patient becomes blue, when a certain percentage of the hemoglobin is reduced. That's not a lay term either, but when the patient is in oxygen need or oxygen want, cyanosis would be apparent.

Mr. SPECTER. And how does that manifest itself in the patient?

Dr. CURTIS. The patient will be a blue, gray, ashen color.

Mr. SPECTER. What action was Dr. Carrico taking upon your arrival?

Dr. CURTIS. He had placed an endotracheal tube in the President's trachea for artificial respiration.

Mr. SPECTER. Was he doing anything else?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes; he was applying the Bird machine.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe what other steps he was taking, if any?

Dr. CURTIS. He directed that a tracheotomy setup be brought to the emergency room, and I think it was Dr. Carrico directed me to start the I.V. fluids.

Mr. SPECTER. And what, if anything, did you do in response to his direction?

Dr. CURTIS. I assisted him in fitting the tube from the Bird machine to the endotracheal tube and I assisted in removing some of the President's clothes and did the cutdown on his leg.

Mr. SPECTER. And what, specifically, did you do pursuant to the cutdown on his leg?

Dr. CURTIS. A small incision was made on the ankle and a vein is bluntly dissected free, small holes placed in the vein and a venous catheter is placed in this vein and a purse string ligature is then tied around the catheter at one end, and then the wound was closed with sutures.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, did you do anything else to the President following that operative procedure?

Dr. CURTIS. Then, the initial cutdown that I started was ineffective and infiltrated into the tissues. I think possibly I cut the knot too close of the purse string ligature, so I was getting ready to do another one and it was decided since fluids were going in the other leg, it wouldn't be necessary.

Mr. SPECTER. What other action did you take, if any, in the treatment of the President?

Dr. CURTIS. That's all.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you remain in the trauma room No. 1?

Dr. CURTIS. I did until he was pronounced dead.

Mr. SPECTER. What action was taken by anyone else in the trauma room while you were there?

Dr. CURTIS. My attention was focused on what I was doing, so I wasn't aware—I knew that a cutdown was being performed and that is about all I could see. I mean, I knew that a tracheotomy was being performed.

Mr. SPECTER. What other doctors were present there at that time?

Dr. CURTIS. I know that Dr. Perry was there and I know Dr. Baxter was

there, and then I recall Dr. Jenkins from the Anesthesia Department, and Dr. Seldin, Dr. Crenshaw, and that's about all the doctors—I could think of others probably, but I can't remember now.

Mr. SPECTER. Can you identify any other nurses who were there?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I can't—I wasn't paying attention to the nurses.

Mr. SPECTER. During the course of your presence near President Kennedy, did you have any opportunity to observe any wounds on his body?

Dr. CURTIS. After I had completed the cutdown, I went around to the right side of the patient and saw the head wound.

Mr. SPECTER. And what did you observe there?

Dr. CURTIS. Oh—fragments of bone and a gross injury to the cranial contents, with copious amounts of hemorrhage.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you observe any other wound on the President?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I didn't. As I said before, I noticed the mass in the pre-tracheal area.

Mr. SPECTER. And when you say "as you said before," you mean in our previous discussions prior to going on the record here?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And will you state now for the record what you did notice with respect to the tracheal area?

Dr. CURTIS. The President's head was extended or hyperextended and I noticed that in the suprasternal notch there was a mass that looked like a hematoma to me, or a blood clot in the tissues.

Mr. SPECTER. How big was that hematoma?

Dr. CURTIS. Oh, I think it was 5 cm. in size.

Mr. SPECTER. What color was it?

Dr. CURTIS. It had no color—there was just skin overlying it.

Mr. SPECTER. What did it appear to be?

Dr. CURTIS. Probably a hematoma.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you observe any perforation or hole in the President's throat?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I didn't. But that doesn't mean it wasn't there.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you have an opportunity to look closely for it?

Dr. CURTIS. I focused my attention on his neck for an instant, and that's all.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you hear any discussion among any of the doctors about an opening on his neck?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I didn't.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you make any written report concerning your activity on the President?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I didn't.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you any notes or writings of any sort concerning your work with the President?

Dr. CURTIS. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you talked to any representatives of the Federal Government about your participation in treating President Kennedy before today?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I haven't.

Mr. SPECTER. Prior to the time that we went on the record here with the court reporter, did you and I have a very brief conversation concerning the purpose of the deposition and the general questions which I would ask you on the record?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And is the information which you have provided on the record the same as that which you gave me before the court reporter started taking notes?

Dr. CURTIS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you have anything to add which you think would be helpful to the Commission in its work?

Dr. CURTIS. No; I don't think so.

Mr. SPECTER. Thank you very much, Dr. Curtis, for coming here today.

Dr. CURTIS. All right.