

(In approximately 3 minutes thereafter the witness returned to the deposing room and the deposition continued as follows:)

Mr. SPECTER. Let me ask you a couple of questions more, Miss Henchcliffe, one other question, or two, before you go.

Was the wound on the front of the neck surrounded by any blood?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Was there any blood at all in that area?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. What was there about the wound, if you recall anything special, which gave you the impression it was an entrance wound?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. Well, it was just a small wound and wasn't jagged like most of the exit bullet wounds that I have seen.

Mr. SPECTER. If there was a high-powered rifle, or a high-powered rifle was going at a fast speed, as fast as 2,000 feet per second, which encountered only soft tissue in the body, would you have sufficient knowledge to know whether or not the appearance of that hole would be consistent with an exit wound?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. Well, from some information I received in talking to someone about guns later on, they said that this is possible. But you have a small exit wound—you could have a small exit wound.

Mr. SPECTER. Under what circumstances?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. As you described—a very fast bullet that didn't hit anything but soft tissue going through.

Mr. SPECTER. And do you have any other source of information or basis for having an opinion whether it was an entrance wound or an exit wound other than that source of information you just described, plus your general experience here at Parkland as a nurse?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. No, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. How long have you been at Parkland as a nurse?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. Well, I have had emergency room experience for about 5 years here and a couple of years at Baylor Hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. And is that the total sum of your experience?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. In the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. And what other experience have you had besides emergency room experience?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. Well, in the operating room here.

Mr. SPECTER. How long have you had operating room experience here?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. 3 years.

Mr. SPECTER. And how long have you been a registered nurse altogether?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. 12 years—almost 12 years.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is the source of information about the appearance of an exit wound from a high-powered gun which you have just described?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. I don't remember who I was talking to now. I was just talking to someone one day about gunshots and after this report came out that said that any high-powered gun that this could happen.

Mr. SPECTER. That it could be an exit wound which looked very much like an entrance wound with the missile striking nothing but soft tissue?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. Yes, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you have anything else to add?

Miss HENCHLIFFE. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Thank you very much.

Miss HENCHLIFFE. All right.

TESTIMONY OF DORIS MAE NELSON

The testimony of Doris Mae Nelson was taken on March 20, 1964, at Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Arlen Specter, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. SPECTER. Mrs. Nelson, this is Miss Oliver, the court reporter, and will you raise your right hand and take the oath?

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

Mrs. NELSON. I do.

Mr. SPECTER. May the record show that Mrs. Doris Nelson is appearing to testify in this deposition proceeding conducted by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy to provide whatever facts, if any, she may know concerning the treatment received by President Kennedy and Governor Connally at Parkland Memorial Hospital on November 22, 1963.

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

Mrs. NELSON. Doris Mae Nelson. Do you want my maiden name?

Mr. SPECTER. Fine, yes; what is your maiden name?

Mrs. NELSON. Morris, M-o-r-r-i-s [spelling].

Mr. SPECTER. Mrs. Nelson, have you had an opportunity to view the joint resolution of the 88th Congress and the Executive order which established the President's Commission?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; I read it yesterday.

Mr. SPECTER. And have you had an opportunity to view the resolution of the President's Commission covering questioning of witnesses by members of the Commission staff?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And are you willing to be questioned today concerning this matter, even though you have not had 3 days' notice?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Therefore waiving the right which you have, a 3 days' notice under the resolution?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. What is your occupation or profession?

Mrs. NELSON. I am a registered nurse, supervisor of the emergency room at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. And how long have you been so occupied?

Mrs. NELSON. A year and 6 months as supervisor of the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. What were your duties in a general way on November 22, 1963?

Mrs. NELSON. I was primarily responsible for assigning personnel in the treatment of the injured patients and carrying out security measures with the Secret Service.

Mr. SPECTER. What notification, if any, did you receive on that date concerning injuries to President Kennedy?

Mrs. NELSON. I received a phone call approximately 3 to 5 minutes prior to their arrival, from the telephone operator, stating that the President had been shot and was being brought to the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. What action after that did you take in preparing for the President's arrival?

Mrs. NELSON. I immediately took the surgical resident into trauma room No. 1, notified him of the incident, and asked the—also told the head nurse that the President had been shot and was being brought to the emergency room.

Then, I went into trauma room 2, after the head nurse had told me that trauma room 1 was set up for any emergency, and proceeded to open a bottle of intravenous fluid and set it up for an emergency situation.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you know at that time that anyone else had been injured?

Mrs. NELSON. No; we were not notified as to anyone else being injured.

Mr. SPECTER. What occurred with respect to the arrival of any injured party at Parkland Memorial Hospital thereafter?

Mrs. NELSON. As I walked out of trauma room No. 2 I heard someone calling for stretchers and an orderly ran back into the area and got a stretcher and ran out of the door, and a few seconds later Governor Connally, who at that time I did not know who it was but recognized him as not being the President, arrived and I directed them into trauma room 2.

Mr. SPECTER. Did the orderly take out one stretcher, or was more than one stretcher taken out?

Mrs. NELSON. I do not know exactly how many stretchers were taken out at the time because I was not out at that area.

Mr. SPECTER. Did another stretcher come into the area?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; immediately behind the Governor another stretcher was brought back into the emergency room and on this stretcher was President Kennedy.

Mr. SPECTER. How were you able to identify President Kennedy?

Mrs. NELSON. Well, I could look and see him and tell that it was him.

Mr. SPECTER. What part did you see?

Mrs. NELSON. The—mainly his head.

Mr. SPECTER. Was there any coat covering his face?

Mrs. NELSON. There was a coat thrown across the top of him, not completely covering his face, and Mrs. Kennedy—do you want me to tell about Mrs. Kennedy and the flowers?

Mr. SPECTER. Yes; continue. Yes; in answering the questions, Mrs. Nelson, feel perfectly free to make as full an answer to the question—I hesitate to have you stop, so that the record we make will appear continuous and everything may be recorded fully for our record purposes.

Mrs. NELSON. Mrs. Kennedy was walking beside the stretcher and the roses that she had been given at the airport were lying on top of the President and her hat was also lying on top of the President as he was brought into the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. Where was he then taken?

Mrs. NELSON. He was immediately taken into trauma room 1.

Mr. SPECTER. And who, if anyone, was present at that time to attend him in a medical way?

Mrs. NELSON. Dr. Carrico, a surgical resident was there at the time that he was brought in, and Dr. Perry, an associate professor of surgery arrived shortly thereafter, and several doctors arrived, Dr. Baxter, associate professor of surgery, Dr. Kemp Clark, professor of neurosurgery and chairman of the department; Dr. Bashour—

Mr. SPECTER. Spell, please.

Mrs. NELSON. B-a-s-h-o-u-r (spelling), chairman of the Department of Cardiology, and several other doctors who I cannot recall all the names at the present time.

Mr. SPECTER. Were you present inside of the emergency room where President Kennedy was taken?

Mrs. NELSON. When what?

Mr. SPECTER. Were you in there at the time they were treating him, caring for him at any time?

Mrs. NELSON. On one occasion I went into the room and this was mainly to ask Mrs. Kennedy if she had rather wait out in the hallway rather than in the room where they were treating the President, and I was told by the Secret Service agent that she may stay in there if she wished.

Mr. SPECTER. Is there any table, or was there any table in the emergency room to which President Kennedy was taken that he could be placed on from the stretcher?

Mrs. NELSON. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Is it the normal situation to have no table present in the emergency room?

Mrs. NELSON. The only one there is in case an ambulance should bring a patient in, but if a patient comes in the emergency room on a stretcher, then the stretcher that is in there is removed. Then the patient remains on the same stretcher that he comes into the emergency room on.

Mr. SPECTER. And was there a stretcher in the emergency room at the time President Kennedy was taken in on a second stretcher?

Mrs. NELSON. It was taken out when they wheeled it in.

Mr. SPECTER. Were there any sheets on the stretcher that President Kennedy was on?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. After President Kennedy was taken off of the stretcher, did you have occasion to observe that stretcher?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; the stretcher was stripped by the nursing personnel working in the room and the stretcher was moved across from trauma room 1 to trauma room 2 in order to get the stretcher out of the room.

Mr. SPECTER. What personnel stripped the stretcher?

Mrs. NELSON. Margaret Henchcliffe, H-e-n-c-h-l-i-f-f-e [spelling], and Diana Bowron, D-i-a-n-a B-o-w-r-o-n [spelling].

Mr. SPECTER. Did you actually observe Diana Bowron or Margaret Henchcliffe strip the stretcher?

Mrs. NELSON. No; I did not. This was the report that I received afterwards.

Mr. SPECTER. From whom did you receive that report?

Mrs. NELSON. From these two nurses.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see the stretcher after it was stripped in the emergency room to which President Kennedy was taken?

Mrs. NELSON. No, I saw it after it was wheeled from trauma room 1 to trauma room 2, because I was standing there at the doorway between the two rooms with the Secret Service Police.

Mr. SPECTER. But it was actually in trauma room 1?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. As it was being wheeled out to trauma room 2 and at the time it was being wheeled out, was there any sheet on it at all—

Mrs. NELSON. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Rolled up on it in any way at all?

Mrs. NELSON. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see where the stretcher was then placed?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes, it was put into trauma room 2.

Mr. SPECTER. Where was President Kennedy's body at that time?

Mrs. NELSON. It was in—it had been placed in a casket in trauma room 1.

Mr. SPECTER. And was the casket on any sort of an object or was it on the floor or what?

Mrs. NELSON. It was on a form of roller-type table.

Mr. SPECTER. And did—do you know what President Kennedy's body was in, if anything, at that time?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes, one of the nurses, Miss Hutton, came out and said that the President was having extensive bleeding from the head and they had wrapped four sheets around it but it was still oozing through, so I sent her to the second floor to obtain a mattress cover, a plastic mattress cover, to put in the casket prior to putting his body in the casket, so the mattress cover was placed in the casket and I did not see this happen, but this is how it was explained to me by the nurse, and the plastic was placed on the mattress cover and the cover was around the mattress.

Mr. SPECTER. Which nurse explained that to you?

Mrs. NELSON. Miss Bowron and Miss Henchcliffe.

Mr. SPECTER. And what was done with the sheets which had been used to absorb the blood from the President's body?

Mrs. NELSON. Well, there were approximately four sheets wrapped around him and the remaining sheets that were on the stretcher were pulled up and thrown in the linen hamper, according to Miss Bowron and Miss Henchcliffe.

Mr. SPECTER. And where is that linen hamper located?

Mrs. NELSON. That linen hamper is located in the utility room area of the emergency room, which is just outside of the trauma room area.

Mr. SPECTER. And what floor is that on?

Mrs. NELSON. On the ground floor of the hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. What was done with Governor Connally?

Mrs. NELSON. Governor Connally was in the emergency room for a very short period, approximately 15 to 20 minutes, at which time he had chest tubes inserted, intravenous fluid started, anesthesia or oxygen given to him, and he was taken immediately from the emergency room to the operating room accompanied by several doctors.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see him inside trauma room No. 2?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; I did.

Mr. SPECTER. And did you observe him when he was taken out of trauma room No. 2?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes, I saw him when he went upstairs to the operating room.

Mr. SPECTER. And how did he get upstairs to the operating room?

Mrs. NELSON. On a stretcher carried by several of the doctors. Miss Standridge went in front and opened doorways and went to the elevator. I could not see her at the elevator but this is what she told me.

Mr. SPECTER. How far could you see her?

Mrs. NELSON. Oh, approximately 30 feet.

Mr. SPECTER. And who is Miss Standridge?

Mrs. NELSON. Head nurse in the emergency room.

Mr. SPECTER. What is her first name?

Mrs. NELSON. Jeanette.

Mr. SPECTER. You say the stretcher was carried?

Mrs. NELSON. Well, it was wheeled.

Mr. SPECTER. And what does the stretcher look like that Governor Connally was on?

Mrs. NELSON. Well, there are no specific details, it's an average type of movable four-wheel stretcher, made out of metal, with a plastic mattress on the stretcher. It has an elevation between—on the sides, so that the—I don't know how to explain exactly.

Mr. SPECTER. A bumper-type effect?

Mrs. NELSON. It has a bumper on the side.

Mr. SPECTER. Is there a tray underneath the place where the body was resting?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And is that the same general description of a stretcher that President Kennedy was brought in on?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; they were the same type.

Mr. SPECTER. Mrs. Nelson, I'm going to show you a four-page statement which is marked "Activities of Doris Nelson, R.N., beginning 12 noon, Friday, November 22, 1963," after I ask that it be marked as an exhibit in connection with this deposition.

(Reporter marked the instrument referred to as Nelson Exhibit No. 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. Is this a photostatic copy of the statement which you gave to Mr. Jack Price, the administrator of the hospital, concerning your activities on November 22, 1963, as they pertain to this matter?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; it is.

Mr. SPECTER. And are the facts set forth herein true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information and belief?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; they are.

Mr. SPECTER. Did I meet with you for a few moments before we started this deposition and explain the purpose of the proceeding?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; you did.

Mr. SPECTER. Did I ask you the same questions which we have discussed here during the course of my questioning before the court reporter?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Thank you very much for providing this deposition to us.

Mrs. NELSON. You are quite welcome.

Mr. SPECTER. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record between Mr. Specter and the witness, Mrs. Doris Nelson.)

Mr. SPECTER. Back on the record, just a minute.

Mrs. Nelson, I will ask you if you would sign the end of this statement here, that it is your statement?

Mrs. NELSON. (Signed statement referred to.)

Mr. SPECTER. And are you willing to waive a requirement, if it is any formal requirement, as to the signing of this deposition?

Mrs. NELSON. Yes; I am.

Mr. SPECTER. Thank you very much.