

TESTIMONY OF JANE CAROLYN WESTER

The testimony of Jane Carolyn Wester 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. Miss Wester, this is Miss Oliver the court reporter and she will take down your testimony here and will you raise your right hand and take the oath?

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

Miss WESTER. I do.

Mr. SPECTER. May the record preliminarily show that the purpose of this proceeding is in connection with the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy to ascertain facts relating to the assassination and all medical treatment obtained by President Kennedy and Governor Connally following their being shot.

The witness at the moment is Miss Jane Wester who has been asked to testify concerning any facts of which she has knowledge concerning treatment of President Kennedy or Governor Connally and the disposition of Governor Connally's clothing and sheet in which he was wrapped at the time the Governor was brought into the operating room at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

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

Miss WESTER. Jane Carolyn Wester.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is your residence address, Miss Wester?

Miss WESTER. 1107 Brockbank, Dallas.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you received a letter of notification from the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy advising you that I would contact you for the purpose of taking testimony from you in connection with this proceeding, Miss Wester?

Miss WESTER. Yes; I have.

Mr. SPECTER. And at that time did you receive the copies of the Executive order creating the Commission and the rules and regulations relating to the taking of testimony?

Miss WESTER. Yes, sir; I did.

Mr. SPECTER. And are you satisfied to appear here today and answer some questions relating to your participation in the treatment of Governor Connally?

Miss WESTER. Yes, sir; I am.

Mr. SPECTER. And President Kennedy?

Miss WESTER. Yes, sir.

Mr. SPECTER. What is your occupation or profession, please?

Miss WESTER. I am a registered nurse.

Mr. SPECTER. And at what institution are you employed?

Miss WESTER. Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas.

Mr. SPECTER. And how long have you been so employed at Parkland Memorial Hospital?

Miss WESTER. Nine years — or 9½.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you outline your duties in a general way as they were back on November 22, 1963?

Miss WESTER. I am assistant supervisor in the operating room, and I assign personnel duties, direct them in their activities.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you receive notice on that date that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were en route to Parkland Memorial Hospital to receive treatment?

Miss WESTER. I was not aware that they were in the hospital.

Mr. SPECTER. When was it first brought to your attention, if at all?

Miss WESTER. At noon, around noon—noontime—I'm not sure as to the exact time it was. I was relieving the secretary for lunch and the phone rang. Someone in the pathology department asked if the President were in the operating room and I answered them, "No," and they said that a Secret Service agent was

down there and as soon as the President did arrive in the operating room, would I please call them.

Mr. SPECTER. What was your next connection, if any, with respect to the treatment of either President Kennedy or Governor Connally at Parkland?

Miss WESTER. I received a phone call from the emergency room asking us to set up for a craniotomy.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is a craniotomy in lay language?

Miss WESTER. That's an exploration of the head.

Mr. SPECTER. Was there any other request made at that time?

Miss WESTER. Yes—well—immediately following, following that I received a call to set up for a thoracotomy, which is an exploration of the chest.

Mr. SPECTER. And were those two set ups made in accordance with the requests you received?

Miss WESTER. Yes; I immediately assigned personnel to set up these two rooms for these two cases.

Mr. SPECTER. And what room was used for the craniotomy?

Miss WESTER. The craniotomy was set up in room 7.

Mr. SPECTER. And what room was used for the thoracotomy?

Miss WESTER. The thoracotomy was set up in room 5.

Mr. SPECTER. And on what floor were the two rooms?

Miss WESTER. Well, on the south wing of the second floor.

Mr. SPECTER. What happened next in connection with this matter?

Miss WESTER. I assigned personnel to take care of the doorways to keep traffic out of the operating room and keep people back—keep the halls clear. Shortly thereafter, Governor Connally arrived in the operating room with several doctors—arrived by stretcher.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, in what way did a stretcher arrive from the first floor, or by what means of locomotion?

Miss WESTER. The stretcher arrived by an elevator which is in the operating room—it comes directly from emergency room and which—there were several doctors with him that brought the stretchers up.

Mr. SPECTER. And what happened to the stretcher after it left the elevator on the second floor of the operating room area?

Miss WESTER. The doctors brought this and were proceeding down the hall, and I met them in the center of the operating room suite itself.

Mr. SPECTER. About how far is that from the elevator door?

Miss WESTER. Approximately 50 feet.

Mr. SPECTER. What was done then with Governor Connally on the stretcher, following the point where you met them?

Miss WESTER. We proceeded to room 5 and outside of room 5 we transferred Governor Connally from the stretcher onto an operating table and removed his clothes from the bottom of the stretcher and placed them in the hallway by the operating table.

Mr. SPECTER. In what way was Governor Connally dressed or robed when you first saw him on the stretcher?

Miss WESTER. As far as I know, the only thing he had was a sheet on him. He had no hospital gown or anything else that I know of on.

Mr. SPECTER. Had his clothes then been removed by that time?

Miss WESTER. Yes; he arrived without his clothes. They were on the bottom of the cart in a paper sack.

Mr. SPECTER. And you said he was transferred from the stretcher onto an operating table?

Miss WESTER. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, was that inside the operating room? Or outside the operating room?

Miss WESTER. No; it's in the hallway right outside room 5—we transferred him onto the operating table, and then moved the table into the operating room.

Mr. SPECTER. And did he have any clothing on at the time you transferred him from the stretcher onto the operating table?

Miss WESTER. I don't recall any clothes that he had on.

Mr. SPECTER. What was then done with Governor Connally on the operating table?

Miss WESTER. The operating table was moved into the operating room and at that time they proceeded to start anesthetics on him and put him to sleep.

Mr. SPECTER. What doctors were in attendance of Governor Connally at that time.

Miss WESTER. Dr.—there were many—Dr. Giesecke, G-i-e-s-e-c-k-e (spelling)—there were so many. Dr. Ray, I believe, was there, and there were many others—right offhand, I can't remember.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you go into the operating room at that time?

Miss WESTER. I went as far as the doorway with him.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, what was done with the stretcher on which he came to that point?

Miss WESTER. I took the stretcher and rolled it to the center area of the operating room suite—rolled the sheets up on the stretcher into a small bundle.

Mr. SPECTER. Was there one sheet or more than one sheet?

Miss WESTER. I believe there were two sheets and I rolled one inside the other up into a small bundle.

Mr. SPECTER. What is the next normal procedure with respect to the number of sheets on such a stretcher in like circumstances?

Miss WESTER. The cart—the mattress on the cart is covered with one sheet, the patient is usually covered with another. When they arrive in the operating room the sheet covering the patient is removed and a grey cotton blanket is placed over the patient and the sheets are rolled up and usually returned to the emergency room with the cart.

Mr. SPECTER. What else, if anything, was on that stretcher?

Miss WESTER. There were several glassine packets, small packets of hypodermic needles—well, packed in and sterilized in. There were several others—some alcohol sponges and a roll of 1-inch tape. Those things, I definitely know, were on the cart, and the sheets, of course.

Mr. SPECTER. Were there any other objects on the cart, on the stretcher cart?

Miss WESTER. Right off, I can't remember—

Mr. SPECTER. Do you recollect whether there were any gloves on the cart?

Miss WESTER. There could have been—I don't recall right off—I can't remember that.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you recall whether there were any tools on one end of the stretcher?

Miss WESTER. I know I set something down on the cart, I think it was a curved hemostat—I couldn't say for sure—I'm not sure.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, you have testified that you met Governor Connally on the stretcher when he was 50 feet from the elevator door. Is there any object at about that spot that is a landmark, so to speak, of that particular spot?

Miss WESTER. Where I met Governor Connally in the operating room?

Mr. SPECTER. Yes.

Miss WESTER. There is a clock.

Mr. SPECTER. About how far from the clock is the door to the operating room, room 5, where Governor Connally was taken?

Miss WESTER. I would say approximately 75 feet.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, what did you do with the stretcher after Governor Connally was taken off of it?

Miss WESTER. I moved the stretcher back to the center area, fairly close to the clock, it wasn't right under it, but fairly close, and an orderly, R. J. Jimison, walked up—

Mr. SPECTER. His initials are R. J.?

Miss WESTER. And he stood at the cart while I rolled the sheets up and removed the items from the cart, and from there he took the cart and proceeded to the elevator with it and the last time I saw him he was standing at the elevator with the cart waiting for him to be picked up.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see that stretcher any more that day?

Miss WESTER. Not that I know of.

Mr. SPECTER. Will you describe in a general way what that stretcher looked like?

Miss WESTER. Well, it has four wheels and a lower shelf, a thin mattress on

it, and side rails on it, on each side of the cart. It has a rubber rim at the edge of it, sort of a bumper type to the upper shelf of the cart.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is it constructed of?

Miss WESTER. Well, it's a metal—steel.

Mr. SPECTER. What was done with the mattress?

Miss WESTER. It remained on the cart. It was not moved then, only the sheets were left and rolled into a bundle. And, when the sheets were rolled into a bundle, I didn't actually lift them up.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see Miss Jeanette Standridge at any time in connection with this particular movement of the stretcher?

Miss WESTER. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see Mrs. Henrietta Ross at any time in connection with this particular movement of the stretcher?

Miss WESTER. No; I believe she walked up on my right as I was rolling the sheets up.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you see Darrell C. Tomlinson at any time in connection with this particular movement of the stretcher?

Miss WESTER. No.

Mr. SPECTER. Were you interviewed by the Secret Service about these events at some time in the past?

Miss WESTER. Yes; I was.

Mr. SPECTER. Were you interviewed by anyone else?

Miss WESTER. No.

Mr. SPECTER. And did the Secret Service interview on one occasion or more than one occasion?

Miss WESTER. Only one occasion.

Mr. SPECTER. And immediately prior to your being sworn in and starting to take this deposition, did I have a very brief conversation with you about the purpose of this proceeding?

Miss WESTER. Yes; you did.

Mr. SPECTER. And about the facts to which you have testified since this formal deposition started?

Miss WESTER. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And at that did you tell me all the facts previously testified to here to this effect?

Miss WESTER. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Did the sheet on which the Governor was lying have anything on it?

Miss WESTER. It had some blood.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you made any notes or any written record of that sort concerning the matters about which you have testified here today?

Miss WESTER. No; I haven't.

Mr. SPECTER. That concludes the deposition, and I thank you very much for appearing here.

Miss WESTER. Fine.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. HENRIETTA M. ROSS

The testimony of Mrs. Henrietta M. Ross was taken at 6:50 p.m., on March 25, 1964, at Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Arlen Specter, assistant counsel of the President's Commission.

Mr. SPECTER. May the record show that the oath has been administered to Mrs. Henrietta Ross who is appearing here in response to a letter request to testify as part of the inquiry of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, which involves the treatment of President Kennedy and Governor Connally at Parkland Hospital.

Mrs. Ross has been asked to appear and testify concerning her knowledge about the stretcher cart on which Governor Connally was transported while in the hospital.