

INVESTIGATION OF
THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

HEARINGS

Before the President's Commission
on the Assassination
of President Kennedy

PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 11130, an Executive order creating a Commission to ascertain, evaluate, and report upon the facts relating to the assassination of the late President John F. Kennedy and the subsequent violent death of the man charged with the assassination and S.J. RES. 137, 88TH CONGRESS, a concurrent resolution conferring upon the Commission the power to administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, receive evidence, and issue subpoenas

Volume

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Dr. AKIN. Yes; as far as I can remember.

Mr. SPECTER. And before I started to take your deposition, did you and I have a very brief discussion about the nature of the deposition and the questions I would ask you?

Dr. AKIN. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And did you give me about the same information, exactly the same information you have put on the record here this morning?

Dr. AKIN. To my knowledge; yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you have anything to add which you think might be of assistance to the President's Commission in their inquiry?

Dr. AKIN. No; I don't think so. I don't know exactly if there is any disagreement or discrepancy in the testimony from the various people who have testified, so I don't know. This is all I saw.

Mr. SPECTER. That's fine. Thank you very much, Dr. Akin.

Dr. AKIN. That's all right, thank you.

TESTIMONY OF DR. PAUL CONRAD PETERS

The testimony of Dr. Paul Conrad Peters was taken at 4 p.m., on March 24, 1964, at Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, Tex., by Mr. Arlen Specter, assistant counsel of the President's Commission. *Paul C. Peters*

Mr. SPECTER. May the record show that Dr. Paul Peters is present, having responded to a request to have his deposition taken in connection with the investigation of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, which is investigating all aspects of the assassination, including the medical treatment of President Kennedy at Parkland Memorial Hospital, and for the latter sequence of events we have asked Dr. Peters to appear and testify what he knows, if anything, concerning that medical attention.

With that statement of purpose in calling you, Dr. Peters, may I ask you to rise and raise your right hand?

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

Dr. PETERS. I do.

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

Dr. PETERS. Paul Conrad Peters.

Mr. SPECTER. And what is your profession, sir?

Dr. PETERS. Doctor of medicine.

Mr. SPECTER. And will you outline for me briefly your educational background?

Dr. PETERS. I went to college at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., and received an A.B. degree from Indiana University in 1950, and received an M.D. degree from Indiana University in 1953. I took my internship at the Philadelphia General Hospital, 1953 and 1954. I took my residency in Urological Surgery at Indiana University from 1954 to 1957, and from 1957 to 1963 I was chief of Urology at U.S.A.F. Hospital, Carswell, which is the largest hospital in SAC, and I was regional consultant to the surgeon general in Urological surgery. Since July 1963, I have been assistant professor of Urology at Southwestern Medical School.

Mr. SPECTER. And are you board certified, Dr. Peters?

Dr. PETERS. I am certified by the American Board of Urology—1960.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you have occasion to render medical services to President John Kennedy on November 22, 1963?

Dr. PETERS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And would you outline briefly the circumstances relating to your arriving on the scene where he was?

Dr. PETERS. As I just gave you a while ago?

Mr. SPECTER. Yes.

Dr. PETERS. I was in the adjacent portion of the hospital preparing material for a lecture to the medical students and residents later in the day, when I heard over the radio that the President had been shot and there was a great deal of confusion at the time and the extent of his injuries was not immediately broadcast over the radio, and I thought, because of the description of the location of the tragedy he would probably be brought to Parkland for care, and so I went to the emergency room to see if I could render assistance.

Mr. SPECTER. And at about what time did you arrive at the emergency room?

Dr. PETERS. Well, could I ask a question or two?

Mr. SPECTER. Sure.

Dr. PETERS. As I recall, he was shot about 12:35 our time; is that correct?

Mr. SPECTER. I believe that's been fixed most precisely at 12:30, Dr. Peters.

Dr. PETERS. So, I would estimate it was probably about 12:50 when I got there, I really don't know for certain.

Mr. SPECTER. Whom did you find present, if anyone, when you arrived?

Dr. PETERS. When I arrived the following people I noted were present in the room: Drs. Perry, Baxter, Ron Jones, and McClelland. The first thing I noticed, of course, was that President Kennedy was on the stretcher and that his feet were slightly elevated. He appeared to be placed in a position in which we usually treat a patient who is in shock, and I noticed that Dr. Perry and Dr. Baxter were present and that they were working on his throat. I also noticed that Dr. Ron Jones was present in the room. I took off my coat and asked what I could do to help, and then saw it was President Kennedy. I really didn't know it was President Kennedy until that time. Dr. Perry was there and he and Dr. Baxter were doing the tracheotomy and we asked for a set of tracheotomy tubes to try and get one of the appropriate size. I then helped Dr. Baxter assemble the tracheotomy tube which he inserted into the tracheotomy wound that he and Dr. Perry had created.

Mr. SPECTER. Were there any others present at that time, before you go on as to what aid you rendered?

Dr. PETERS. I believe Dr. Carrico—

Mr. SPECTER. Any other doctors present?

Dr. PETERS. And Dr. Jenkins was present.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you now covered all of those who were present at that time?

Dr. PETERS. And Dr. Shaw walked into the room and left—for a moment—but he didn't stay. He just sort of glanced at the President and went across the hall. Mrs. Kennedy was in the corner with someone who identified himself as the personal physician of the President—I don't remember his name.

Mr. SPECTER. Dr. Burkley?

Dr. PETERS. I don't know his name. That's just who he said he was, because he was asking that the President be given some steroids, which was done.

Mr. SPECTER. He requested that.

Dr. PETERS. That's right, he said he should have some steroids because he was an Addisonian.

Mr. SPECTER. What do you mean by that in lay language?

Dr. PETERS. Well, Addison's disease is a disease of the adrenal cortex which is characterized by a deficiency in the elaboration of certain hormones that allow an individual to respond to stress and these hormones are necessary for life, and if they cannot be replaced, the individual may succumb.

Mr. SPECTER. And Dr. Burkley, or whoever was the President's personal physician, made a request that you treat him as an Addisonian?

Dr. PETERS. That's right—he recommended that he be given steroids because he was an Addisonian—that's what he said.

Mr. SPECTER. Were there any nurses present at that time?

Dr. PETERS. I don't remember a nurse being in the room all the time, but they were coming in and out.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you identified all the people who were present to the best of your recollection?

Dr. PETERS. Did I mention Dr. Robert McClelland, he was also there.

Mr. SPECTER. Was Dr. Dulany there?

Dr. PETERS. I don't remember him, he may have been.

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Mr. SPECTER. Who else was there, if anyone, that you can recall, or have you now given me everyone you can recall?

Dr. PETERS. Well, I am giving you my impression of the situation as I walked in and those are the ones I remember right now. Dr. Kemp Clark also came in during the maneuvering.

Mr. SPECTER. Well, who else came in during the course of the operative procedures?

Dr. PETERS. The anesthesiologists, Drs. Jenkins and Gene Akin, I believe, came in.

Mr. SPECTER. Did anyone else come in?

Dr. PETERS. I am not certain of anyone else.

Mr. SPECTER. Now, tell us what aid was rendered to President Kennedy.

Dr. PETERS. Dr. Perry and Dr. Baxter were doing the tracheotomy and a set of tracheotomy tubes was obtained and the appropriate size was determined and I gave it to Baxter, who helped Perry put it into the wound, and Perry noted also that there appeared to be a bubbling sensation in the chest and recommended that chest tubes be put in. Dr. Ron Jones put a chest tube in on the left side and Dr. Baxter and I put it in on the right side—I made the incision in the President's chest, and I noted that there was no bleeding from the wound.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you put that chest tube all the way in on the right side?

Dr. PETERS. That's our presumption—yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And what else was done for the President?

Dr. PETERS. About the same time—there was a question of whether he really had an adequate pulse, and so Dr. Ronald Jones and I pulled his pants-down and noticed that he was wearing his brace which had received a lot of publicity in the lay press, and also that he had an elastic bandage wrapped around his pelvis at—in a sort of a figure eight fashion, so as to encompass both thighs and the lower trunk.

Mr. SPECTER. What was the purpose of that bandage?

Dr. PETERS. I presume that it was—my thoughts at the time were that he probably had been having pelvic pain and had put this on as an additional support to stabilize his lower pelvis. It seemed quite interesting to me that the President of the United States had on an ordinary \$3 Ace bandage probably in an effort to stabilize his pelvis. I suppose he had been having some back pain and that was my thought at the time, but we removed this bandage in an effort to feel a femoral pulse. We were never certain that we got a good pulse.

Mr. SPECTER. Would you describe in as much detail as you can the type of brace he was wearing?

Dr. PETERS. Well, it appeared similar to a corset.

Mr. SPECTER. How thick was it?

Dr. PETERS. I would estimate it was one-eighth of an inch.

Mr. SPECTER. An eighth of an inch thick?

Dr. PETERS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. And how high was it?

Dr. PETERS. Well, it completely encompassed his midsection.

Mr. SPECTER. It encompassed his midsection?

Dr. PETERS. His circumference—yes—and it was probably, I would guess about 8 to 11 inches.

Mr. SPECTER. In width?

Dr. PETERS. Yes.

Mr. SPECTER. Running in his waist area at the top of his hips up to the lower part of his chest?

Dr. PETERS. I would estimate that it went from the lower part of his chest to the pelvic girdle. About this time it was noted also that he had no effective heart action, and Dr. Perry asked whether he should open the chest and massage the heart. In the meantime, of course, the tracheotomy had been done and completed and had been hooked on to apparatus for assisting his respiration.

Mr. SPECTER. And what action, if any, was taken on the open-heart massage?

Dr. PETERS. It was pointed out that an examination of the brain had been done. Dr. Jenkins had observed the brain and Dr. Clark had observed the brain and it was pointed out to Dr. Perry that it appeared to be a mortal wound, and

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involving the brain, and that open-heart massage would probably not add anything to what had already been done, and that external cardiac massage is known to be as efficient as direct massage of the heart itself.

Mr. SPECTER. Was there any further treatment rendered to the President?

Dr. PETERS. Yes, Dr. Perry began immediate external compression of the chest in an effort to massage the heart, even before he asked the question as to whether the thoracotomy should be done. As soon as there was a question as to whether there was a pulse or not, he immediately began external chest compression.

Mr. SPECTER. What other action was taken to aid the President, if any?

Dr. PETERS. Well, cut downs were done on the extremities, and tubes were inserted in the veins, and I know on the right ankle anteriorly, and I believe in the left arm and also in the left leg, in order to administer fluid and blood which he did receive.

Mr. SPECTER. Have you now described all of the medical attention given the President?

Dr. PETERS. Well, I believe I have.

Mr. SPECTER. And was the President subsequently pronounced dead?

Dr. PETERS. That's correct.

Mr. SPECTER. And about what time was that pronouncement made?

Dr. PETERS. I could not give you the time within 5 or 10 minutes—I can tell you this much, though, I know what actually did happen.

Mr. SPECTER. Tell me that.

Dr. PETERS. I was—we pronounced him dead and I was in the room, present while the priest gave him the last rites, during which time there was Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Baxter and Dr. McClelland, Mrs. Kennedy, the priest, and myself. Dr. Perry had left, as had most of the others by that time.

Mr. SPECTER. Why did you remain?

Dr. PETERS. Well, I just hadn't gotten out of the door when the priest first came in and Dr. Jenkins asked everyone to leave except those people I have just named.

Mr. SPECTER. Why did he exclude those from the group which were to leave?

Dr. PETERS. Well, I think they were nurses, and several other people he thought just best not remain and I'm sure that there was no intention to personally exclude anyone behind his request. He just sort of looked around and saw who appeared to be there and asked the others to leave.

Mr. SPECTER. What did you observe as to the nature of the President's wound?

Dr. PETERS. Well, as I mentioned, the neck wound had already been interfered with by the tracheotomy at the time I got there, but I noticed the head wound, and as I remember—I noticed that there was a large defect in the occiput.

Mr. SPECTER. What did you notice in the occiput?

Dr. PETERS. It seemed to me that in the right occipitalparietal area that there was a large defect. There appeared to be bone loss and brain loss in the area.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you notice any holes below the occiput, say, in this area below here?

Dr. PETERS. No, I did not and at the time and the moments immediately following the injury, we speculated as to whether he had been shot once or twice because we saw the wound of entry in the throat and noted the large occipital wound, and it is a known fact that high velocity missiles often have a small wound of entrance and a large wound of exit, and I'm just giving you my honest impressions at the time.

Mr. SPECTER. What were they?

Dr. PETERS. Well, I wondered whether or not he had been shot once or twice—that was my question at the time.

Mr. SPECTER. When you say "we speculate," whom do you mean by that?

Dr. PETERS. Well, the doctors in attendance there.

Mr. SPECTER. Any doctor specifically?

Dr. PETERS. I wouldn't mention anyone specifically, we all discussed it. I did not know whether or not he had been shot once or twice.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you have an opportunity to observe the wound on his neck prior to the time the tracheotomy was performed?

Dr. PETERS. No, I did not. The tracheotomy was already being done by Dr. Baxter and Dr. Perry when I got in the room. I did not see the wound on his neck.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you make any written reports on the treatment of President Kennedy?

Dr. PETERS. No, I did not; no one asked me to.

Mr. SPECTER. Did you prepare any notes of any sort, or do you have any notes of any sort?

Dr. PETERS. No; I do not.

Mr. SPECTER. What was the cause of death in your opinion?

Dr. PETERS. I would assume that it was irreversible damage to the centers in the brain which control the heart and respiration.

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

Dr. PETERS. No; I have not.

Mr. SPECTER. And prior to the time the court reporter came in, did you and I have a brief discussion as to the nature of this deposition and the questions that I would ask you?

Dr. PETERS. No; I was not informed as to any specific questions. I knew the general nature of the testimony which I would give.

Mr. SPECTER. From the discussion?

Dr. PETERS. From the letter I had received from the counsel signed by Mr. Rankin.

Mr. SPECTER. And did you and I have a brief conversation here in this room today before the court reporter came in?

Dr. PETERS. Yes; we did.

Mr. SPECTER. Do you have anything to add which you think might be of assistance to the President's Commission in its investigation?

Dr. PETERS. I do not—regarding the immediate condition of the President.

Mr. SPECTER. Thank you very much for coming, Dr. Peters, we are very much obliged to you.

Dr. PETERS. Thank you.

A. H. GIESECKE, JR.

Adolph A. Giesecke, Jr.

TESTIMONY OF DR. ADOLPH HARTUNG-GIESECKE, JR.

The testimony of Dr. Adolph Hartung Giesecke, Jr., was taken at 1:40 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 Dr. A. H. Giesecke, Jr., is present in response to a letter request from the Commission to appear at this deposition proceeding in connection with the President's Commission to Investigate the Assassination of President Kennedy, including his medical treatment at Parkland Hospital.

Dr. Giesecke has been asked to appear to testify about his knowledge of the treatment that President Kennedy and Governor Connally received at Parkland Hospital on November 22, and with that preliminary statement of purpose and objective, would you please stand up, Dr. Giesecke, and raise your right hand?

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you give before this President's Commission in these deposition proceedings will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Dr. GIESECKE. Yes; I do.

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

Dr. GIESECKE. Adolph Hartung Giesecke, Jr. H-a-r-t-u-n-g (spelling).

Mr. SPECTER. What is your profession?

Dr. GIESECKE. I am a physician and anesthesiologist.