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MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

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Friday, December 22, 1978

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House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Assassinations
Washington, D.C.

The select committee met, pursuant to adjournment, at
9:20 a.m., in Room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon.
Louis Stokes (chairman of the select committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Stokes, Preyer, Dodd, Edgar,
McKinney, Thone, and Fithian.

1 The Chairman. The meeting will come to order.

2 At this time the Chair recognizes Professor Blakey.

3 Mr. Blakey. Mr. Chairman, it might be appropriate since I
4 am a witness to invoke the rule that excludes the camera people.
5 I say that only in jest, but I do say it in this sense: I would
6 like to express in this context my public apology to the commit-
7 tee that a newspaper printed last night certain statements
8 attributed to me. In fact, when the reporter talked to me I
9 indicated that I would have, consistent with the committee's
10 rules, no comment. He then asked me on a background basis for
11 certain guidance.

12 I gave him that in the most general way, suggesting that
13 the committee might meet today and it might want to consider a
14 hearing in the future. I say nothing beyond that. I deeply
15 regret that anything I did in that context has been publicly
16 utilized and attributed in any way to the committee.

17 Mr. Chairman, the schedule for this morning's meeting had
18 contemplated that the committee consider the findings and recom-
19 mendations that were considered last month and wrote them out.
20 As I am sure each member of the committee knows, as indeed
21 apparently the whole world knows, this committee has had made
22 available to it certain evidence dealing with the number of
23 shots in Dealey Plaza. I might suggest to the committee it
24 would be appropriate for the committee to consider whether or
25 not that evidence ought to be taken in a public session prior to

1 the consideration of its findings and recommendations.

2 The Chairman. The Chair will recognize members of the
3 committee for any comments.

4 The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Preyer.

5 Mr. Preyer. Mr. Chairman, I think we should hear this in
6 public session. This testimony has received a lot of news
7 coverage on the question of its credibility and the worthiness
8 of its belief is certainly crucial. It is difficult to proceed
9 with our final findings and conclusions until we first make the
10 judgment on whether this is believable testimony. I would hope
11 we would hear this in public session.

12 The Chairman. Thank you.

13 The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Fithian.

14 Mr. Fithian. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe we have any
15 alternative. I think it has to be made available to the American
16 people and I believe it is essential that the scientists who
17 have reached these conclusions based on their own analysis of
18 the data must be asked to present not only the findings but with
19 some precision exactly how they arrived at those findings.

20 I would observe that this is a substantiation of the Barter
21 testimony which was taken in public and Barter's testimony of
22 the 50-50 possibility or whatever it was of the fourth shot was,
23 as all now recognize, what led us to ask for further analysis by
24 additional scientists. And therefore since the Barter testimony
25 was public and since this is probably the most crucial element

1 in the hearings on the Kennedy assassination I think it would be
2 unthinkable not to have this in public session.

3 The Chairman. Thank you.

4 The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. McKinney.

5 Mr. McKinney. I would like to agree with both the state-
6 ments made before. There was never any question in my mind that
7 this would be a subject for public session anyway and I think it
8 is just unfortunate it has been, so to speak, pre-released, and
9 if we are talking about a final report, we cannot write a final
10 report until this becomes a part of the public record and I
11 think we should meet next week and have the experts here and let
12 the American people hear them directly.

13 The Chairman. Thank you.

14 The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Edgar.

15 Mr. Edgar. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Mr. Chairman, I agree we ought to have public hearings as
17 quickly as possible so that the American people can see the
18 testimony that has been presented to us in executive session.

19 I would suggest that as part of that public testimony we
20 not only receive testimony from our two differing consulting
21 firms who have looked at the acoustical data but also try to
22 present some analysis of exactly how accurate acoustical studies
23 are, and I think that perhaps some work needs to be done earlier
24 next week to find a witness who can talk objectively as an expert
25 witness on the validity and the weight that can be given to the

1 kinds of consultant techniques that we have employed in the
2 acoustical study. On the whole I think we ought to wait for
3 that evidence before we have our findings and recommendations
4 voted by the committee and I would hope we could encourage all
5 the members of our committee to make next week's hearing and be
6 in attendance on time.

7 The Chairman. Thank you.

8 The gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Thone.

9 Mr. Thone. Merry Christmas.

10 The Chairman. Merry Christmas to you.

11 Will all members of the committee be available on the 29th
12 of December for public hearings?

13 The Chair then will make the following statement.

14 It is regretted that information that was given to the
15 Select Committee on Assassinations in a confidential briefing
16 has been made public prematurely. I say this because it would
17 have been preferable for the committee to have had an opportuni-
18 ty to consider the information as a committee before it became
19 a matter of public concern. In light of the nature of the
20 scientific evidence that has recently been made available to
21 this committee, it will be the subject of a public hearing at
22 9 a.m., Friday, December 29. The evidence will be heard in the
23 full context and the possible meaning of it will be explored by
24 this committee at that time.

25 A report of the findings and recommendations of the

1 committee will be filed with the Clerk of the House by noon on
2 January 3, 1979. The report will be released to the press, at
3 that time.

4 The commentary to these findings and recommendations and a
5 summary of the basic evidence the committee has assembled in
6 its investigations of the assassinations of President John F.
7 Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be made public as
8 soon as it can be reviewed for security declassification and
9 edification, and edited for publication.

10 I expect this work to be completed by no later than
11 March 30 and I am hopeful that parts of the committee's final
12 report can be released in the interim.

13 Thank you. There being nothing further at this time this
14 committee is adjourned until 9 a.m., Friday, December 29.

15 (Whereupon, at 9:30 a.m., the committee was adjourned, to
16 reconvene at 9 a.m., Friday, December 29, 1978.)

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