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Friday, December 22, 1973

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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.
The Chairman. The meeting will come to order.

At this time the Chair recognizes Professor Blakey.

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

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

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

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

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Preyer.

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

The Chairman. Thank you.

The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Fithian.

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

I would observe that this is a substantiation of the Barter testimony which was taken in public and Barter's testimony of the 50-50 possibility or whatever it was of the fourth shot was, as all now recognize, what led us to ask for further analysis by additional scientists. And therefore since the Barter testimony was public and since this is probably the most crucial element
in the hearings on the Kennedy assassination I think it would be unthinkable not to have this in public session.

The Chairman. Thank you.

The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. McKinney.

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

The Chairman. Thank you.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Edgar.

Mr. Edgar. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

I would suggest that as part of that public testimony we not only receive testimony from our two differing consulting firms who have looked at the acoustical data but also try to present some analysis of exactly how accurate acoustical studies are, and I think that perhaps some work needs to be done earlier next week to find a witness who can talk objectively as an expert witness on the validity and the weight that can be given to the
kinds of consultant techniques that we have employed in the
acoustical study. On the whole I think we ought to wait for
that evidence before we have our findings and recommendations
voted by the committee and I would hope we could encourage all
the members of our committee to make next week's hearing and be
in attendance on time.

The Chairman. Thank you.

The gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Thone.

Mr. Thone. Merry Christmas.

The Chairman. Merry Christmas to you.

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

The Chair then will make the following statement.

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

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

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

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

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

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