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Subject: Associated Press Complete Story on Ford Edits in Rankin Papers
WARREN COMMISSION REPORT AILETED BY MIKE FLINDSILDER ASSOCIATED PRESS WHITER WASHINGTON (AP) -- Thirty-
three years ago,Gerald R. Ford took pen in hand and changed --ever so slightly -- the Warren Commission's
keysentence on the place where a bullet entered JohnF. Kennedy's body when he was killed in Dallas. The
effect of Ford's change was tostrengthen the commission's conclusion that asingle bullet passed through
Kennedy and severelywounded Texas Gov. John Connally -- a crucialelement in its finding that Lee Harvey
Oswald wasthe sole gunman. A small change, said Ford on Wednesdaywhen it came to light, one intended to
clarifymeaning, not alter history. ``My changes had nothing to do with aconspiracy theory," he said in a
telephoneinterview from Beaver Creek, Colo. ``My changeswere only an attempt to be more precise." But still,
his editing was seized upon bymembers of the conspiracy community, which rejectsthe commission's
conclusion that Oswald actedalone. ``This is the most significant lie in thewhole Warren Commission report,"
said Robert D.Morningstar, a computer systems specialist in NewYork City who said he has studied
theassassination since it occurred and written anInternet book about it. The effect of Ford's editing,
Morningstarsaid, was to suggest that a bullet struck Kennedyin the neck, ``raising the wound two or
threeinches. Without that alteration, they could neverhave hoodwinked the public as to the true numberof
assassins." If the bullet had hit Kennedy in the back,it could not have struck Connolly in the way
thecommission said it did, he said. The Warren Commission concluded in 1964that a single bullet -- fired by a
``discontented" Oswald -- passed through Kennedy's body and wounded his fellow motorcade passenger,
Connally, and that a second, fatal bullet, fired from the same place, tore through Kennedy's head. The
assassination of the presidentoccurred Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas; Oswald wasarrested that day but was shot and
killed two dayslater as he was being transferred from the cityjail to the county jail. Conspiracy theorists reject
the idea thata single bullet could have hit both Kennedy andConnally and done such damage. Thus they
arguethat a second gunman must have been involved. Ford's changes tend to support thesingle-bullet theory
by making a specific pointthat the bullet entered Kennedy's body ``at theback of his neck" rather than in his
uppermostback, as the commission staff originally wrote. Ford's handwritten notes were contained in40,000
pages of records kept by J. Lee Rankin,chief counsel of the Warren Commission. They were made public
Wednesday by theAssassination Record Review Board, an agencycreated by Congress to amass all relevant
evidencein the case. The documents will be available tothe public in the National Archives. The staff of the
commission had written:``A bullet had entered his back at a pointslightly above the shoulder and to the right
ofthe spine." Ford suggested changing that to read: ``Abullet had entered the back of his neck at a
Record
Body:
recstat:
DeliveryPriority: N
DeliveryReport: B
ReturnReceipt:
Categories: