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Subject: Associated Press Complete Story on Ford Edits in Rankin Papers
WARREN COMMISSION REPORT AILETED BY MIKE FLINZILBER ASSOCIATED PRESS WIREL 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 John F. Kennedy's body when he was killed in Dallas. The
effect of Ford's change was to strengthen the commission's conclusion that a single bullet passed through
Kennedy and severely wounded Texas Gov. John Connally -- a crucial element in its finding that Lee Harvey
Oswald was the sole gunman. A small change, said Ford on Wednesday when it came to light, one intended to
clarify meaning, not alter history. "My changes had nothing to do with a conspiracy theory," he said in a
telephone interview from Beaver Creek, Colo. "My changes were only an attempt to be more precise." But still,
his editing was seized upon by members of the conspiracy community, which reject the commission's
conclusion that Oswald acted alone. "This is the most significant lie in the whole Warren Commission report,"
said Robert D. Morningstar, a computer systems specialist in New York City who said he has studied
the assassination since it occurred and written an Internet book about it. The effect of Ford's editing,
Morningstar said, was to suggest that a bullet struck Kennedy in the neck, "raising the wound two or
three inches. Without that alteration, they could never have hoodwinked the public as to the true number of
assassins." If the bullet had hit Kennedy in the back, it could not have struck Connolly in the way
the commission said it did, he said. The Warren Commission concluded in 1964 that 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 president occurred Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas; Oswald was arrested that day but was shot and
killed two days later as he was being transferred from the city jail to the county jail. Conspiracy theorists reject
the idea that a single bullet could have hit both Kennedy and Connally and done such damage. Thus they
argue that a second gunman must have been involved. Ford's changes tend to support the single-bullet theory
by making a specific point that the bullet entered Kennedy's body "at the back of his neck" rather than in his
uppermost back, as the commission staff originally wrote. Ford's handwritten notes were contained in 40,000
pages of records kept by J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel of the Warren Commission. They were made public
Wednesday by the Assassination Record Review Board, an agency created by Congress to amass all relevant
evidence in the case. The documents will be available to the public in the National Archives. The staff of the
commission had written: "A bullet had entered his back at a point slightly above the shoulder and to the right
of the spine." Ford suggested changing that to read: "A bullet had entered the back of his neck at a

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