

Consecutive Dialogue

Audio recording of the English court interpreting exercise nine, consecutive dialogue. You will hear part of the examination of a witness in court. The exercise is broken up into several segments. After each segment you will have time to reproduce the whole segment in English, in your own words.

Exercise 9

Q. Thank you. Now, with respect to the matter before the Court, Dr. Robinson, I understand that on October the 19th, you performed an autopsy on the body of an individual identified as Robert Taylor?

A. That's correct.

Q. Can you tell us what observations you made during the autopsy on Mr. Taylor's body?

A. Mr. Taylor had sustained a number of gunshot wounds. He had sustained one wound which passed through his left hand, entering the back of the left hand, exiting the palmar surface of the left hand, and then entering the left side of his chest, passing across towards the right side.

Q. Could you perhaps get up and demonstrate the -- the areas of the left hand and of the chest where you noticed the injuries which caused you to give the evidence you did... concerning this particular gunshot wound?

A. I would like to refer to my notes. I have pencil sketches made at the time of the examination, and a typed report dictated during the course of the examination.

The Court: Yes. You may refer to them, Doctor.

A. The gunshot wound that I've referred to entered the back of the hand, exited here on the palmar surface of the hand, entered the chest on the left side up at the top.

Q. All right.

A. The bullet then passed in a left to right direction and towards the back and came to rest in the back of the body underneath the shoulder blade.

Q. All right. So you would have observed four injuries: one to the back of the hand, one to the palm of the hand, one to the upper chest and one behind the back under the right arm?

A. There was no exit from this wound and the bullet was recovered.

Q. All right. And what exactly did you actually recover?

A. I recovered a deformed white metal projectile from behind the right shoulder-blade. I also recovered a separate copper jacket that I found inside the right chest.

Q. It's my understanding you turned over anything that you discovered, particularly foreign material in Mr. Taylor's body, to Constable Sanders of the R.C.M.P.

A. That's correct.

Q. All right.

A. The second gunshot wound was a wound which passed through the left forearm, entering this portion of the left forearm, exiting the left forearm, entering this side of the chest, passing across the chest, again left of the body to the right.

This one exited the right side of the chest towards the back, so there was no projectile recovered from this wound.

Q. Can you tell us about the two gunshots you've described so far, as they pass through the torso, not the various parts of the hand, you've indicated passed through the body from left to right.

Can you tell us the level of the trajectory in terms of whether it was level, whether it was downward, upward or what can you tell us in that respect?

A. The level of the wound I've just described, that's the one that exits through the torso, is essentially left to right on the horizontal, and the one that I described before that, the portion that goes through the torso, again left to

right essentially on the horizontal. It's not going up or down in any measurable way.

Q. All right. And can you tell us any other finding that you made?

A. There was a third gunshot wound that passed through the chest. The entrance was in the back of the chest wall. The exit wound was in the front, and the bullet had passed straight through, back to front, a little bit downwards, not enough to measure, and a little bit towards the left.

Q. All right. As a result of your observations and things you've told us about, were you able in this case to determine a cause of death?

A. The cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

Q. What can you tell us, based on the various wounds and the trajectory of the body? Would you tell us in your opinion, the mechanism by which Mr. Taylor died, in the sense of what internal injuries he suffered and how the various shots you described caused his death?

A. The wounds that passed through the chest broke ribs, damaged lungs, and more importantly, shredded a two inch portion of the aorta. The aorta is the main artery in the body. It runs from the heart and delivers blood to the rest of the body.

Either of those two wounds in their own right, and certainly both together, would have produced very rapid death. The third gunshot wound, the one that passed through the chest, actually passed through and disrupted the heart, so that wound in itself had the potential of causing fairly immediate death.

However, the characteristics of that wound on appearance were somewhat different from the other two. The typical changes, the vital reaction that we see in the skin, particularly surrounding an entrance wound when a person is alive and with an intact circulation, were not present with this wound, so this wound had the characteristics of having been sustained either around the time of death, that is during the dying process, or after death.

Q. All right. I take it from your evidence is that whatever the order of the first two shots you describe, the ones that pass through the torso, in your opinion,

the shot that went through the back and through the heart was third in order in time.

A. Correct. That is my opinion.

Q. All right. Now, in terms of sequencing, you've told us why you thought the shot to the back was third in order of time. Was it possible, from examining Mr. Taylor's body, to determine the order of the first two shots?

A. No. Either of the first two shots could have come first. The only thing that I can say about the first two shots, because they both shredded this large artery, the aorta, they had to have been sustained fairly quickly in terms of their time relationship to each other.

The minute that aorta was shredded by the first shot, Mr. Taylor was dying. He had effectively around nine to eleven seconds in which he could have still functioned or stayed upright.

That's the time it takes to utilise the oxygen that's already in the brain. Because the aorta is shredded, no circulation is now going to reach his brain, so no additional oxygen is going to be supplied to the brain to function. Given the fact that the trajectories are so close to each other, almost parallel as they go through the body, the shots had to be sustained in very rapid succession.

The evidence suggests that with the passing through the same organs and shredding the same portion of the aorta, Mr. Taylor was still in the same position when he sustained the second shot as he was when he sustained the first shot.

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