

ADELMAN, ROGER M.: Papers, 1981-1982
(2 folders)

NOTE

This collection (2 folders) is housed in the Library's high-value storage area. A full photocopy set (1 folder) of this material is available for research use

Biography

Roger Mark Adelman (1941-2015) was an Assistant United States Attorney in March 1981 at the time President Reagan was shot by John Hinckley in an assassination attempt.

Roger M. Adelman was born June 25, 1941, in Norristown, Pa., where his father was a carpet salesman.

Mr. Adelman, a football star named to his high school's athletic hall of fame, was the first person in his family to attend college. He was a rower at Dartmouth College, from which he graduated in 1963. He received his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1966.

Adelman joined the U.S. Army, where he studied the Russian language at a military language school in Monterey, California. After leaving the Army, he joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington in 1969.

During his 18 years as a federal prosecutor, Mr. Adelman argued nearly 300 cases before juries. He was known for his diligent preparation and commanding courtroom presence. He handled an array of cases including homicide, robbery, kidnapping, white-collar and organized crime cases. He is most well-known for prosecuting some of the defendants in the Abscam bribery case and John Hinckley for the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan.

Mr. Adelman left the federal prosecutor's office in 1987 and worked for several years at the firm of Kirkpatrick & Lockhart (now K&L Gates) before going into solo practice. He participated in class-action lawsuits against tobacco companies and the Texas conglomerate Enron.

He also worked for special prosecutor Kenneth W. Starr in the 1990s on the investigation of irregularities in the White House travel office during the administration of President Bill Clinton. No charges were filed.

Mr. Adelman was also a popular adjunct law professor at Georgetown University from 1974 to 1998.

Scope Note

On March 31, 1981, President Ronald Reagan exited the Washington Hilton Hotel after delivering a speech to the National Conference of Buildings and Trades, AFL-CIO. From a small, unsearched crowd watching the President exit the rear of the Hilton, John Hinckley fired six shots at the President and the group of people escorting him. Hinckley shot Press Secretary James Brady in the head, District of Columbia police officer Thomas Delahanty in the neck,

Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy in the abdomen and a ricochet bullet hit the President in the chest and lungs. No one died in this attack, but Press Secretary James Brady was permanently disabled by the bullet.

Hinckley was immediately arrested on the scene and charged with attempted assassination making it a federal crime. The prosecution team was led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roger Adelman. Hinckley's trial was in the spring of 1982 and he was found not guilty by reason of insanity on June 21, 1982. The defense psychiatric reports had found him to be insane while Adelman vigorously insisted the government reports declared him legally sane. Neither Hinckley nor the President testified at the trial.

The material within this collection consists of personal notes; arrest records; evidence description of the Washington Hilton; notes of the original interview with President Reagan on April 7, 1981 and a typed transcript of this interview; and 1982 memorandum and meetings on the prosecution's efforts to persuade the President to testify at the trial of Hinckley.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1
Ronald Reagan, President (1)(2)