

# King death photos bared



**THE BULLET'S PATH** — This drawing shows the tearing path of a bullet that smashed into Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The bullet struck his right jaw, covered the spine and ended up in the chest.

Exactly where did the assassin's death bullet strike Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?

What was the path of the bullet — from its point of origin until it struck Dr. King?

After Dr. King was shot, was he so severely wounded that his life could not have been saved?

Did doctors in Memphis do all they could to

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save the life of the human rights leader who was then the nation's No. 1 fighter against white racism?

Was the death bullet found?

Where?

Answers to these questions were given last week when photographs, drawings and other exhibits — almost all of them gruesome—were viewed by the House Assassinations Committee here last week.

The committee—headed by Rep. Louis Stokes (D Ohio)—viewed photographs of Dr. King taken just after he was murdered and heard testimony from pathological experts on the April 4, 1968, shooting in Memphis, Tenn.

The committee, in its second day of public testimony on the death of the civil rights leader sought to dispel questions about the trajectory of the fatal bullet.

The pictures were grim.

One was taken from behind Dr. King — revealing the back of his head and a conspicuous lump several inches below the left shoulder where the bullet was imbedded after entering his body through the lower right jaw.

Experts said the bullet apparently smashed through Dr. King's spinal column and, in the words of one witness, would have left him a "vegetable" had he lived.

Another picture showed Dr. King's neatly knotted tie, the neckband severed where the bullet had cut through.



The medical experts were assembled to determine if the preliminary medical treatment administered to Dr. King was adequate from the time he was taken by ambulance from the Lorraine

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Motel to St. Joseph's hospital where he died about an hour after the shooting.

The experts were also asked to review the autopsy report and the exhibits and to determine if the trajectory of the bullet "indicates the point of origin of the shot."

Finally, they were asked if the damage to King's body and clothing was consistent with what could be expected from a projectile of the type recovered from the body.

A pathologist testified, after re-examination of the scene, that the autopsy report, x-rays, pictures, and diagrams of the slaying of Nobel Peace prize-winner turned up nothing inconsistent with conclusions drawn at the time of the murder.

Dr. Michael M. Baden, head of a panel of three medical examiners named by the assassinations committee to restudy the evidence, illustrated his testimony with photographs of the bullet wounds Dr. King sustained when he was murdered during the time he went to Memphis to aid striking garbage collectors.

The wound, Baden told the committee, was "entirely consistent" with the analysis that the

fatal bullet had been fired from a Memphis, Tenn., rooming house bathroom across the street from the Lorraine Motel's second floor balcony. Dr. King was slain as he and a group of associates stood on the balcony.

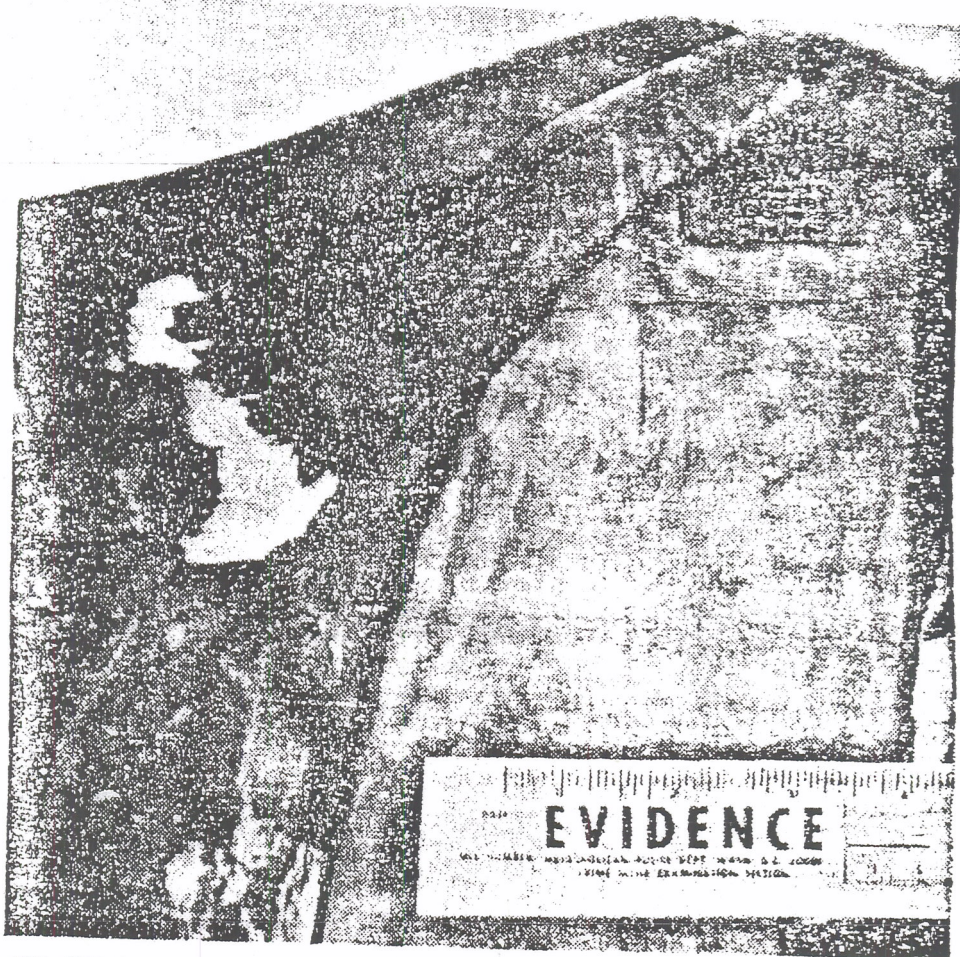
Baden testified that pathology is too inexact a science for him to be able to state conclusively whether the bullet, fired from a .30-06 rifle, came from the bathroom window or from a bushy area in the rooming house backyard.

But if came from one or the other, he said, and he could rule out a shot fired from close range. There was no trace of gunpowder on the body, he said.

Baden, chief medical examiner for New York City, said he was satisfied that Dr. King received "vigorous medical treatment."

When the wounded civil rights leader arrived at St. Joseph's Hospital, "the heart was still beating but the brain was irreparably damaged," he said.

The house committee is conducting the first public investigation of the slaying since James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to the murder charge in 1969. The panel also is re-investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.



DR. KING'S JACKET — This photo shows the gaping bullet hole in the jacket Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wore when he was assassinated.