

Doctor Tells of Autopsy Sketch Error

WASHINGTON (AP) — A doctor who helped perform the autopsy on President John F. Kennedy said Thursday he made a diagram error in a hasty "worksheet" sketch which was not drawn for the final autopsy report. Some critics have used the sketch in challenging the Warren Commission Report.

Dr. J. Thornton Boswell said the diagram showed that the lower bullet wound was in the President's back. Actually, he said, the wound was at the back of the base of the neck.

Notes Correct
But Boswell said the diagram was drawn quickly during the autopsy as "rough notes" and was not intended to be exact. He pointed out that longhand notes he made on the sketch gave the correct precise location of the wound.

Boswell noted that the written autopsy report and the official testimony of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination, both located the wound correctly. However, FBI reports of the autopsy stated that the wound was in the back.

Misled Critics
This led some critics to suggest that perhaps the wound actually was in the back. If this were true, these critics claimed, the bullet would not have come out of Mr. Kennedy's throat. Therefore, they said, the plot could not have involved both Mr. Kennedy

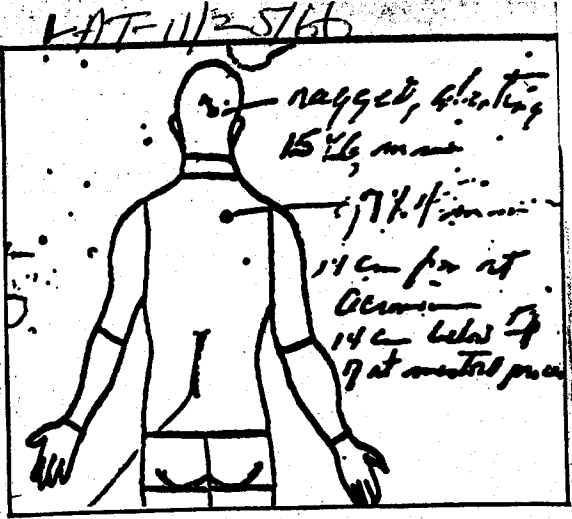


DIAGRAM ERROR—Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, who helped perform the autopsy on President Kennedy, said he made a mistake in this hastily drawn diagram. He said the lower bullet wound was at the base of the neck and not as far down as shown.

and Texas, who was sitting in front of Mr. Kennedy. In an interview, Boswell said that when he examined the autopsy photographs for the first time Nov. 1, the pictures showed clearly that the wound was in the neck. The photographs are in

the National Archives and are not available to the public.

One of the critics of the Warren Report, Edward Jay Epstein, used the diagram and the FBI report to suggest the possibility that there may have been a second assassin.

But Epstein, author of the book "Inquest," has conceded in published articles that if the autopsy photos showed the wound in the neck, there would be no further doubt about the autopsy report and that a second assassin would be ruled out.

Boswell, a former Navy doctor now in private practice, said of his sketch error: "This was an unfortunate

If I had known at the time that the sketch would become public record, it would have been more careful." He said the diagram "was strictly a worksheet—the same as rough working notes. You could see that by looking at it. It was very dirty." As for the FBI reports, Boswell said they were simply wrong. He noted that the FBI agents at the autopsy were not trained in medicine. The autopsy report concluded that a single bullet killed both Mr. Kennedy and Connally, and Boswell said in the interview that the FBI agents' "horrible inaccuracy" was a "disgrace."