

TO PRESIDENT

Neck Wounds Bring Death

Wounds in the lower front-portion of the neck and the right rear-side of the head ended the life of President John F. Kennedy, say doctors at Parkland Hospital.

Whether there were one or two wounds was not decided.

The front neck hole was described as an entrance wound. The wound at the back of the head, while the principal one, was either an exit or gangential entrance wound. A doctor admitted that it was possible there was only one wound.

Dr. Kemp Clark, 38, chief of neurosurgery and Dr. Malcolm Perry, 34, described the President's wounds. Dr. Clark asked how long the President lived in the hospital, replied, "I would guess 40 minutes but I was too busy to look at my watch."

Dr. Clark said the President's principal wound was on the right rear side of his head.

"As to the exact time of death we elected to make it—we pronounced it at 1300. I was busy with the head wound."

Dr. Perry was busy with the wound in the President's neck.

"It was a midline in the lower portion of his neck in front."

Asked if it was just below the Adam's apple, he said, "Yes.

Below the Adam's apple.

"There were two wounds. Whether they were directly related I do not know. It was an entrance wound in the neck."

The doctors were asked whether one bullet could have made both wounds or whether there were two bullets.

Dr. Clark replied, "The head wound could have been either an exit or a gangential entrance wound."

The neurosurgeon described the back of the head wound as:

"A large gaping wound with considerable loss of tissue."

Dr. Perry added, "It is conceivable it was one wound, but there was no way for me to tell. It did however appear to be the entrance wound at the front of the throat."

"There was considerable bleeding. The services of the blood bank were sent for and obtained. Blood was used.

The last rites were performed in "Emergency Operating Room No. 1.

There were at least eight or 10 physicians in attendance at the time the President succumbed. Dr. Clark said there was no possibility of saving the President's life.

The press pool man said that when he saw Mrs. Kennedy she still had on her pink suit and that the hose of her left leg were saturated with blood. In the emergency room, Mrs. Kennedy, Vice Pres. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson grasped hands in deep emotion.

Postscript to Reporting

On the afternoon of November 22, 1963, I served as a "rewrite" reporter for the Dallas Times Herald Newspaper. My assignment was to type "stories" dictated to me by reporters in the field, or to conduct first-hand interviews with persons at the request of the City Editor or his assistants.

Among the stories and interviews was an interview with "the doctors at Parkland," requested by an editor. I talked with Drs. Malcom Perry and Kemp Clark, chief neurologist. The interview required no more than ten minutes to conduct, as both Perry and Clark were composed and cooperative.

When both were asked "whether one bullet could have made both wounds or whether there were two bullets," Dr. Perry confidently stated that the neck wound was an entrance wound. Dr. Clark was not precise about his answer, and instead, stated that the head wound was "either an exit or a tangential entrance wound." The doctors said that they had no way of knowing whether the wounds were connected.

The story was printed as written, with a lack of editing because of the chaotic situation of the newsroom. The word tangential appeared as "gangential," a typographical error made either by me or the linotype operator. But the story was clearly about two wounds.

When the story appeared in Saturday's paper, a sentence had been inserted stating, "A doctor admitted that it was possible there was only one wound." The statement contradicted the remainder of the story to such an extent that I called the city desk and asked who had written the statement. I was told "the FBI."

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were at the newspaper Saturday. They interviewed Bob Jackson, who had seen a gun barrel in the window of the Texas School Book Depository.

Constance Kritzberg