

FBI Confused by Oswald's Loose Pistol Barrel

➤ THE BULLETS that killed Patrolman J. D. Tippit of the Dallas Police Department were never positively identified by the FBI as having come from the gun of Lee Harvey Oswald, despite ordinarily foolproof microscopic examination.

Ordinarily a bullet can be matched with the gun from which it was fired by examining the marks made on the bullet during its passage through the gun barrel.

Every barrel develops different markings, even on two seemingly "identical" guns.

The bullets from Oswald's gun, however, could not be identified in this manner, the Warren Commission Report revealed. The gun, originally a .38-caliber Smith and Wesson revolver, had been rechambered for the .38 Special cartridge which has a slightly smaller-diameter bullet.

However, it had not been rebarreled for the smaller bullet; consequently, bullets fired from the gun would fit loosely and follow an erratic path through the barrel. This resulted in inconsistent markings, even to the microscope.

Although the spent cartridge shells found in the revolver were positively identified as having been fired from it, the FBI found that consecutive test bullets fired from the gun could not be matched with each other.

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