

# MD: Panel Distorted My

By JARED KOPEL

A longtime critic of the Warren commission report has accused the Rockefeller commission on CIA activities of a "gross misrepresentation" of his testimony in its report concerning medical data on the assassination of President Kennedy.

"Within the context of my entire testimony, the statement attributed to me and the manner in which it was used in the report are a gross misrepresentation and a most despicable distortion of my statements," Dr. Cyril Wecht, the coroner of Pittsburgh and a forensic specialist, told *The Post*.

Wecht said he still believes that at least two gunmen had been involved, and that one fired from the right side of the President's car, perhaps from the so-called grassy knoll.

The Rockefeller report said that a freshly assembled panel of medical and scientific experts unanimously concluded that President Kennedy had been struck by only two bullets, both fired from the rear, "and that there is no medical

evidence to support a contention that the President was struck by any bullet coming from any other direction."

According to the Rockefeller commission, "Dr. Wecht testified that the available evidence all points to the President being struck only by two bullets coming from his rear, and that no support can be found for theories which postulate gunmen to the front or right front of the presidential car."

Wecht said this reference to his testimony distorts the thrust of the five-hour deposition he made to the commission staff in early May.

"I did not say it like that," the medical expert stated firmly.

Wecht said that in its own investigation, the Rockefeller commission made no attempt to obtain and study Kennedy's brain—which has been preserved. He called such an examination vital to determine the entry path of the fatal head wound.

Wecht was the first critic of the Warren commission report allowed to see items from the autopsy which are at

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the National Archives. He said that during his research he learned that the brain had been preserved, but was not available for public inspection—presumably at the request of the Kennedy family.

Wecht agreed that he had said "the evidence made available does indicate" that the shots which killed Kennedy "were more to the direction of the rear than any other location."

But he added that he also testified "the evidence would point to a shot having been fired from at very least the southwest portion of the Texas [School Book Depository] building and from a lower floor, or possibly further down toward the grassy knoll area."

The Warren commission concluded Lee Harvey Oswald had fired from the southeast window on the sixth floor of the book warehouse.

Most of all, the medical specialist criticized the Rockefeller panel for ignoring his prime contention—that it was not possible, as the Warren report concluded, for a single

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bullet to have passed through Kennedy and severely wound John Connally, the Governor of Texas, who was riding in the front of the presidential car.

The Pittsburgh coroner has been one of the most prominent advocates of the position that the bullet was not sufficiently damaged to have passed through two men, causing such extensive wounds.

"The most important thing I have been saying is that two gunmen were involved in the shooting of President Kennedy, and the major evidence on which I base this conclusion is the failure of the single bullet theory," Wecht stated. "Without the single bullet theory, you cannot have a sole assassin."

The pathologist said most

of his lengthy deposition the Rockefeller panel's staff had been devoted to disproving the "single bullet" and "sole assassin" theories. "But they just stayed away completely from this," he complained.

Wecht also said he stood by his previous assertions that Oswald could not have fired the shots as fast as it is alleged from his bolt action rifle, and that the wound in the back of Kennedy's head as stated in the Warren report is four inches lower than the autopsy photographs show.

Attacking the Rockefeller commission's performance as "poor, inadequate, and surreptitious," Wecht said the integrity of the panel had been compromised because "it was a carefully selected panel associated in a professional sense with defending the Warren report in some way."

In addition, the specialist complained that he had been refused, without reason, a transcript of his testimony to the commission.

Wecht said that last Friday, before the Rockefeller commission findings were made public, he had sent a letter "stating my disgust with the superficiality of the panel's inquiry" to Sen.

Frank Church (D-Idaho), who heads a select Senate panel investigating intelligence activities.

The coroner said he had urged Church to obtain a transcript of his deposition. "Now I will press even harder to get a transcript," Wecht stated.