

# Doctor discounts one-bullet theory of JFK slaying

By RON KEEFOVER  
Courthouse Writer

A University of Kansas Medical Center pathologist has written a medical journal article discounting the one-bullet theory in the 1963 slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

The article, by Dr. John Nichols, Kansas City, alleges many medical facts, as well as testimony conflicting with evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination, were ignored by the Warren Commission.



Dr. John Nichols

Nichols is a forensic pathologist who has testified on several occasions in Shawnee County District Court. He unsuccessfully filed suit in U.S. District Court here to gain access to evidence from the assassination contained in the national archives.

Nichols has spent many of the 14 years since the slaying examining exhibits and conducting his own tests in an effort to either substantiate or weaken a basic finding of the Warren Commission, the theory that one bullet caused Kennedy's wounds, as well as those to former Gov. John Connally. His findings have been published for the first time in a 20-page article in the Maryland State Medical Journal.

Nichols findings center on tests he conducted which he contends prove a bullet, emerging from Kennedy's necktie area, would have had to have veered 28 degrees to the left once it exited Kennedy in order to enter Connally's shoulder area at the location of the governor's wound.

The questioned bullet, the first apparently fired during the six-second assassination, is presumed to have entered the neck of the president from behind and emerged at the midline near the necktie. It is to have entered the back of the governor's chest, fracturing the fifth rib, traversed the thorax right to left and emerged below the right nipple.

It is presumed to have continued, fracturing the governor's right wrist, and it is presumed to have become entangled in his clothing, only later to fall from his trousers on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Nichols' article states.

"The second shot is considered to have missed, while the third and last shot inflicted the president's fatal head wound," the article states.

Nichols said his paper is a reassessment of Connally's wounds, "taking

into account hitherto ignored, but available, facts about his (leg) wound. From this, I hope, will emerge an awakening to the magnitude of what I consider to be the inadequacy and superficiality in probing the medical aspects of the assassination by the Warren Commission."

Nichols said in the article he discovered "an alarming number of previously unnoticed or ignored errors. Some of these may have had a bearing on the guilt or innocence of the accused, had he been afforded the trial to which he was entitled."

A major dispute Nichols has with the theory that one bullet caused the wounds to both Kennedy and Connally, besides its dubious path, concerns the bullet's condition once it was found among Connally's clothing on a stretcher in Parkland Hospital. The questioned bullet was missing 2.4 grains of metal when it was found, Nichols said.

The explanation offered the Warren Commission was that the missing metal fragmented and became embedded in Connally's leg. Nichols disputes the claim, and asks how it could have struck the leg with enough force to dislodge the fragment, yet fall loosely from his clothing onto the stretcher.

"Much speculation and confusion prevails from failure of attempts to make (the questioned bullet) fit into the one-bullet theory and to account for all the missing metal," the article states.

"After reviewing the meager available material, it is the opinion of this writer that a bullet fragment is not embedded in the left femur of Gov. Connally," Nichols' article states, "contrary to the opinions of one of his attending physicians, his colleagues and Parkland Hospital. Therefore, in regard to his, the conclusions of the Warren Commission are in error and the one-bullet theory is further weakened, in my judgment."

"This challenge could have been avoided if independent medical talent have been utilized by the Warren Commission," the article concludes. "It is feasible to remove the surgically-accessible foreign body present 8 mm under the skin on the medial side of the governor's left thigh. It could subsequently be identified and compared with the metal in (the questioned bullet) by neutron activation."

"When one considers studies pertaining to the velocity, energy and penetrating power of authentic ammunition using anatomical specimens and simulations, it is difficult to reconcile these results with the conclusions of the Warren Commission," the article states.

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