

MEDICINE

Kennedy Alive in Hospital

The head wound President Kennedy received was fatal and although he was technically alive when he reached the hospital, his condition was hopeless.

➤ PRESIDENT KENNEDY was alive technically, but his condition was hopeless from the time he reached Parkland Hospital in Dallas, between five and ten minutes after he was shot in the head.

Compared to the treatment given President Lincoln after his assassination at close range by a shot in the head, nearly 100 years before, the care given to President Kennedy was more modern but equally of no avail.

Even in President Lincoln's time, his doctor tried to establish circulation by a forerunner of the closed chest massage. He also tried to establish an open airway to the lungs and carried out the artificial respiration method then in vogue.

President Kennedy was blue-white or ashen in color, Dr. Charles J. Carrico, a resident in general surgery, who was the first physician to see him, observed.

The slow, spasmodic, agonal respiration without any coordination led Dr. Carrico to attempt to improve the President's breathing. Dr. Malcolm O. Perry arrived in the room a few minutes after the President was taken there, and in three to five minutes he performed a tracheotomy, or surgical opening in the windpipe.

Knowing that there was already a kidney insufficiency, Dr. Carrico gave the President hydrocortisone, and while the tracheotomy was being performed, Drs. Carrico and Ronald Jones made cutdowns on the right

leg and left arm to infuse blood and liquids into the circulatory system.

Other doctors joined in efforts to revive the President. His own physician, Admiral George Burkley, arrived at the hospital after emergency treatment was under way and concluded that anything he might do would interfere with the action of the team.

In the absence of any neurological, muscular or heart response, all the doctors agreed that further efforts were hopeless.

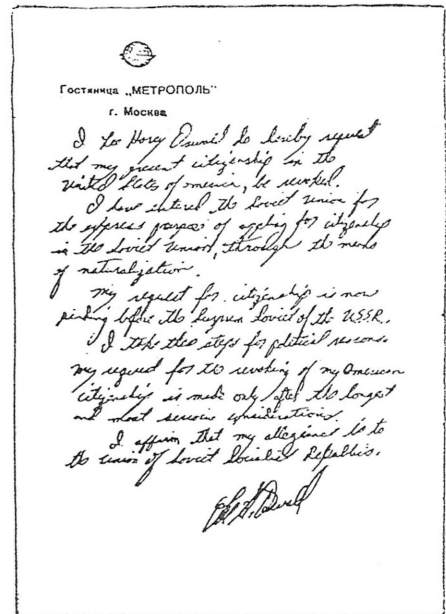
Of the two bullet wounds, one in the back of the neck and the other shattering the back of the skull, the President could have survived the first, but the head wound was fatal.

The Warren report explained why the doctors did not turn the President over, allowing him to remain on his back throughout his medical treatment at the hospital.

Dr. Carrico testified that in trying to treat an acutely injured patient, you have to establish an airway, adequate ventilation and circulation. "Before this was accomplished the President's cardiac activity had ceased and closed cardiac massage was instituted, which made it impossible to inspect his back."

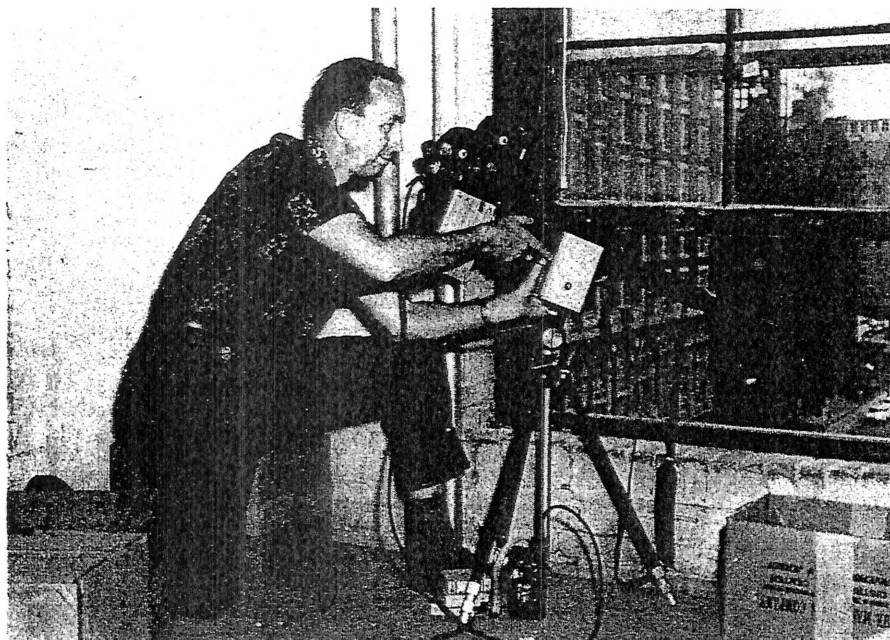
Asked why there was no later effort at the hospital to inspect his back, Dr. Carrico replied, "I suppose nobody really had the heart to do it."

• Science News Letter, 86:229 October 10, 1964



Warren Commission

EXHIBIT NO. 913 — Note handed by Oswald to the American Embassy in Moscow on Oct. 31, 1959.



Warren Commission

COMMISSION EXHIBIT NO. 887—This photograph taken during reenactment shows C2766 rifle with camera attached.