

Kennedy's Wounds Pondered

Pathologists in Washington speculated Saturday that President Kennedy's spinal cord and some vital nerve tracts near the base of his brain may have been badly damaged by the bullet that killed him Friday.

This could have caused or greatly contributed to his death, they said, by impeding and eventually shutting off the nerve centers in the brain that control breathing and heart action.

Before death came, they said, he may have been partly paralyzed, probably was unconscious and probably suffered no pain, Associated Press reported.

Doctors who attended the slain President at Dallas and those who later—at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md.—prepared his body for burial, have not given the specific cause of death.

And it has not yet been announced whether an autopsy involving a post mortem examination to vital organs was performed at the Naval Hospital.

But, from medical details given out at Parkland Hospital, pathologists not connected with the case pieced together this admittedly speculative picture of what may have happened.

They noted that reports from Dallas said there were two wounds, one in the neck, one in the back of the head. The neck wound was just below the "Adam's apple," or larynx.

The Washington pathologists said that if the wound was near the Adam's apple, which is on the midline of the neck, the bullet probably struck the spinal cord, which runs up to the brain via the back of the neck, also at the midline.

They said a bullet entering the body near the Adam's apple or leaving it at that point could also plow into vital nerve channels at the base of the brain. These channels and centers control breathing and heart-beat action.

Injury to the base of the brain—as distinguished from the top and front of the brain—constitutes an immediate threat to life.

The top of the brain contains the centers of learning. Thus while injury there can be handicapping, it is not necessarily fatal.