X-rays Confirm Oswald Was Alone, Medic Says

The first private physician to see the long-withheld X-ray taken in the 1963 autopsy of President John F. Kennedy said yesterday there was no doubt in his mind that the president was gunned down by a single assailant.

Dr. John K. Lattimer, chairman of the department of urology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, told a news conference his inspection of the autopsy data removed previous reservations he had about the Warren Commission findings.

The Warren Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald fired all the shots that killed Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

Lattimer, who viewed the documents last Friday in the National Archives in Washington, was the first nongovernmental medical specialist given access to them since the Kennedy family five-year ban on public examination expired last October. The photographs were deposited with the National Archives in 1966.

He said he inspected 65 X-rays, color transparencies and black and white negatives.

Lattimer, 57, who has lectured and written about the assassination said autopsy documents showed that the initial bullet passed through the President's body at a distinctly downward angle, more than was shown in sketches released by the Warren Commission. He said he reached that conclusion after inspecting X-rays and the suit, shirt and tie worn by the President when he was shot in a Dallas motorcade.

The first bullet would not have killed the President, Lattimer said. However, in the next five seconds, although Kennedy slumped over in the car, "he was still sitting upright and was highly visible."

The second and fatal bullet was a military bullet and, "though as it was, shattered his brain and part of his head terribly," Lattimer said. The color photographs were "so devastating, I can understand why the Kennedy family would be reluctant to make them public," he added.

Lattimer said he had set up a rifle range at his Michigan farm and had practiced rapid [illegible] with his two sons in order to duplicate Oswald's actions.

"Both bullets came from behind and from the rear as the Warren Commission said, and I know after my own experiments that Oswald was a perfectly competent marksman," he said.

Some critics of the Warren Commission's findings have suggested that the second bullet was fired by another assailant facing the President's car.

Lattimer said the X-rays proved without a doubt that the front and rear wounds in the slain President were caused by the same bullet which passed through Kennedy's body and then struck then-Texas Gov. John Connally who was riding in the President's car.

Lattimer said there was no evidence of a third bullet but that he believed one had been fired and missed the presidential car.

Burke Marshall, deputy dean of Yale Law School and representative of the Kennedy family, said Lattimer was the first expert to request permission to view the documents when the moratorium ended last October.

Marshall, entrusted by the Kennedy family to decide who will see the documents, said he was considering similar requests from three other physicians — Dr. Cyril H. Wecht of Pittsburgh, Dr. John Nichols of the University of Kansas, and Dr. E. Forrest Chapman medical examiner of Wayne County, Mich.

Dr. John K. Lattimer shows where the bullet exited.

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