

CRONKITE: Critics have claimed that in fact the bullet came from the President's stretcher, which would rule out the single bullet theory. But the President's stretcher was never in that elevator and consequently Mr. Tomlinson's recollection disposes of that particular dispute. It does not dispose of another claim, however, the claim that the bullet was planted on the Governor's stretcher as part of a plot to link Oswald to the assassination. And that claim can never be disproved.

The bullet is almost intact, only slightly flattened, with a little cone of lead missing from the rear end. Could such a bullet have penetrated successively, a human neck, a human torso, a wrist and a thigh, and emerged in this condition? The Commission used animal carcasses and blocks of gelatin to test the bullet's penetrating power, firing repeated shots from Oswald's rifle. Now, this is standard technique. But, because of the difficulty of lining up such a shot, the Commission experts fired their bullets separately through the various simulators. Each time they measured how much speed the bullet had lost from its initial 2,000 feet per second, and in the end, concluded that the bullet would have retained enough velocity to penetrate the Governor's thigh.

But, it seemed to us that the only completely valid test would be a single shot directly through a series of objects with the same thickness and density as the two bodies. We decided to make that shot.

RATHER: Dr. Alfred G. Olivier, Chief of Wound Ballistics at Edgewood Arsenal, who conducted the tests for the Warren Commission, served as consultant to CBS News in these experiments at the H. P. White Ballistics Laboratory, Dr. Olivier suggested using gelatin blocks to simulate human tissue. The main object was to line up targets simulating the President's neck and the Governor's chest, wrist and thigh, spaced as far apart as Mr. Zapruder's film indicated they were in the limousine, and then to see how far a 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano bullet would penetrate.

Extensive research at Edgewood Arsenal has shown that gelatin, in a 20 percent concentration, gives a good simulation of human tissue. The first gelatin block was made five and a half inches thick to simulate the President's neck, with cloth added to represent his coat and shirt. Set two feet or so away was a 12 inch block representing the Governor's chest, also with appropriate clothing. This high speed sequence, taken at 22,000 frames a second, shows the chest simulation block and how the bullet, slightly unstable after passing through neck simulation, begins to turn off course as it tears through the gelatin, exiting in an attitude pointing down.

The wrist block was two and a half inches thick, inset with masonite to represent bone. Beyond was a fourth gelatin target representing the Governor's thigh. Dr. Olivier told reporter Walter Lister about the tests.

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