

Connally's Wounds Held No

By David W. Belin

WHILE the family of John B. Connally, the former Texas governor, buried him, conspiracy theorists advanced specious claims that tiny bullet fragments in his right wrist would prove there was a second gun — thus a second assassin — in the slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

In Mr. Connally's wrist were fragments of the bullet that had first passed through Kennedy's neck and then had entered Mr. Connally's back, exited his chest, passed through his right wrist and stopped in his left thigh, when Kennedy was slain in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

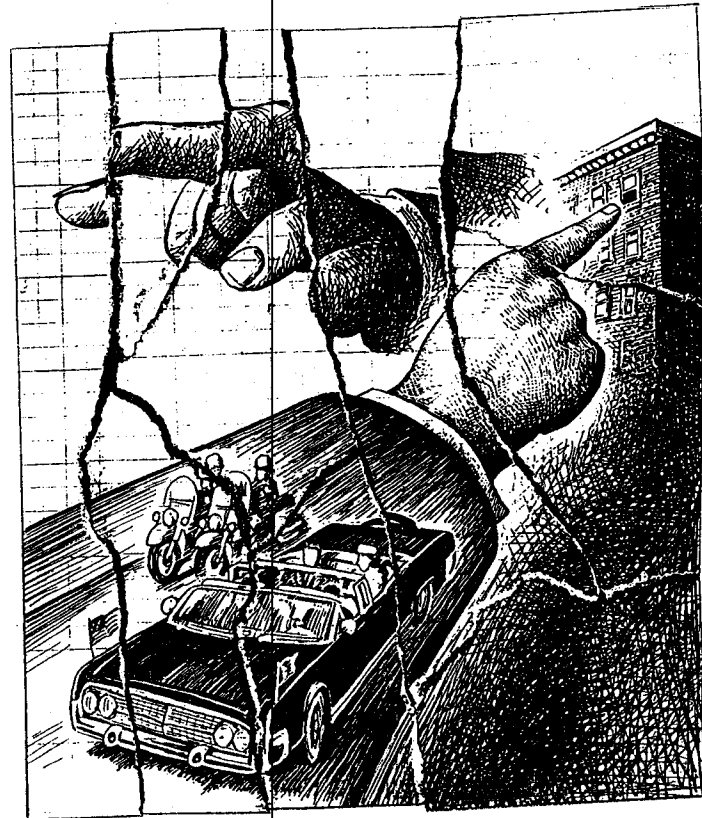
The assassination sensationalists argued that these fragments, each of which weighs less than a postage stamp, would determine whether Mr. Connally had been struck by more than one bullet and whether the nearly whole bullet that rolled off his stretcher in Parkland Hospital had caused all his wounds.

The Connally family declined to permit tampering with the Governor's body with good reason.

All the physicians who treated Mr. Connally for his wound agreed that he had been struck by just one bullet, fired from behind.

Tiny fragments of that bullet had been removed from his wrist in 1963 and, in 1978, had been subjected to neutron activation analysis by an expert in the field, Dr. Vincent P. Guinn,

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Christophe Vorlet

who had been retained by the House Select Committee on Assassinations. He determined that the fragments removed from Mr. Connally came from the bullet found in the hospital, which was ballistically proved to have come from Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle.

The Warren Commission and House committee unanimously con-

cluded that all the shots that struck Kennedy and wounded Mr. Connally were fired from behind by Oswald. Two bullets struck Kennedy, one smashing his skull and killing him.

Since Mr. Connally's death, the person dominating the TV screen on the bullet issue has been Dr. Cyril Wecht, one of the most vocal critics of the Warren Commission report. His alle-

OP-ED FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1993

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gations that Kennedy was struck from the front by a dum-dum bullet that vanished have been disproved repeatedly by independent experts.

Four panels totaling 20 doctors have examined the Kennedy autopsy photographs and X-rays. Nineteen unequivocally concluded that all the shots that struck Kennedy and Mr. Connally had been fired from behind.

Dr. Wecht, the sole dissenter, was the only one among the 20 doctors retained as a medical consultant, for a fee of thousands of dollars, by the producers of the cynically misleading movie "JFK." He was the only one of the 20 to appear in the five-hour A & E TV network series, "The Men Who Killed Kennedy," a gross misrepresentation of the overall record.

Last year, when I talked on the phone with Mr. Connally about "JFK" and the A & E series, we discussed the bullet that had injured him. He had raised questions about the single-bullet theory, he said, because he was certain he was hit by the second, not the first, shot.

The single-bullet theory is solid.

I said that the commission and House committee had determined that one of the three shots Oswald fired had missed, and that the committee had concluded that it was the first one that had missed. There was, I said, nothing inconsistent between Mr. Connally's belief that the second shot had struck him and the findings of the commission and committee that the bullet that passed through Kennedy's neck had hit him. This was confirmed by the fact that the exit speed of the bullet from Kennedy's neck was nearly 1,800 feet per second. If it had not struck Mr. Connally, it would have struck inside the Presidential limousine, causing great damage. No such damage occurred.

If Mr. Connally did not believe that Oswald was the sole gunman, he would have moved heaven and earth to find any other culprit.

About 2 percent of the Warren Commission files have not been made public. Most of the C.I.A. files have also been withheld. I have had access to all these files. I said in 1975 that the files should be released. I still think so. Full disclosure would confirm the commission's findings that Oswald was the lone gunman. □