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Surgeon says he thinks Connally was not struck by Kennedy bullet

By EARL GOLZ

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The surgeon who operated on Gov. John Connally's chest after he was wounded by an assassin here in 1963 told The News Wednesday he believed Connally was not hit by a bullet that first struck President John F. Kennedy as the Warren Commission concluded.

Dr. Robert Shaw said he thought the bullet that struck Connally "was not consistent with the appearance of the bullet that was found on the governor's stretcher," which had only about 2 of 161 grains missing.

Connally's shattered wrist bone alone "would have deformed a bullet badly enough to have metallic fragments knocked off of it," Dr. Shaw said.

DR. SHAW'S THEORY, never before publicly aired, would mean that accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald either fired his rifle even more accurately and quickly with three hits or that Oswald was not the only person shooting.

The Warren Commission credited Oswald with two hits, including one that went through Kennedy and Connally, and alleged that one shot completely missed the open limousine in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963.

Dr. Shaw's opinion that the nearly pristine bullet that supposedly went through three parts of Connally's body "just didn't seem to have lost enough of its metallic substance" also would tend to support a head nurse's statement last month that more than three bullet fragments were removed from Connally's wrist. The Warren Commission said no more than three fragments were removed.

Audrey N. Bell, the nurse in charge of the operating room at Parkland Me-

morial Hospital in 1963, has been called a key witness in the probe of the Kennedy slaying by the House Assassinations Committee.

After Miss Bell's story appeared, a state highway patrolman, Charles W. Harbison, told The News he was given a second group of fragments by someone who emerged from Connally's hospital room on Nov. 25 or 26, several days after Miss Bell handled her set of fragments.

MISS BELL'S FRAGMENTS were placed in an envelope Nov. 22 and delivered within 24 hours to the FBI laboratory in Washington, D.C. Harbison said he gave his fragments, carried in the cup of his hand, to an unidentified FBI agent in the hospital hallway and never saw them again.

Neither Miss Bell nor Harbison, one of the guards at Connally's hospital room, was called to testify before the Warren Commission.

Dr. Shaw testified extensively before the commission but didn't state his views about the single bullet theory because "they never questioned me about that . . . because there was no way in which I could have given any testimony that would have pinpointed it one way or another."

The theory that a single bullet struck Kennedy in the back and exited at his throat and then inflicted the three wounds on Connally "was being pushed very hard by a young lawyer who was working under Arlen Specter, the chief lawyer, more or less, of the Warren Commission," Dr. Shaw said.

"He (young lawyer) evidently was able to sell this thing," Dr. Shaw said. "This really had a lot to do with the fact that they couldn't account for the whereabouts of the third bullet . . ."

But from the standpoint of the governor's wounds, I never felt that the single bullet theory was a good one."

Dr. Shaw also noted that Connally and his wife both have stated they did not think Connally was hit by the bullet that first struck Kennedy.

The bullet that hit Connally, Dr. Shaw said, probably shattered and was represented by two metallic fragments found on the floor of the limousine weighing about 65 grains. The bullet that supposedly fell off Connally's stretcher was probably the one that went through Kennedy's back and exited at his throat, he said.

The time that elapsed between the reactions of Kennedy and Connally ranged between .5 and 1.5 seconds, according to the frame count of the Zapruder film of the assassination. The Warren Commission stated "there is very persuasive evidence" that the same bullet passed through both men, despite the variations in reactions.

The Warren Commission tested the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found in the Texas School Book Depository Building and determined that it cannot be fired twice consecutively in less than 2.3 seconds. This would be without allowing time to reposition and re-aim the rifle at a moving target.