

Did Secret Service agent kill JFK?

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BALTIMORE (AP)—A Maryland gunsmith who has spent years studying the assassination of President John F. Kennedy believes that a Secret Service agent accidentally fired the fatal bullet, panicking after hearing Lee Harvey Oswald's first shot.

"Since 1969 I have been unable to turn up evidence which shakes any part of my conclusion," gunsmith Howard Donahue said in an interview with the Baltimore Sunday Sun.

Donahue accepts the evidence that Oswald was trying to kill the president, but he says Oswald's first bullet missed the presidential car, hitting the pavement and breaking up in a spray of metal fragments.

"It is a matter of record that five metal fragments were picked up later in the car," he said. "There is pictorial

evidence of their hitting the windshield and also denting a piece of chromework near the rearview mirror."

Donahue, who has a gun shop in suburban Towson, theorizes that one of the fragments was the 6.5 mm piece of metal found between Kennedy's skull and skin.

"It would sting—as a shot from a BB gun would sting—and after having been hit, the president could have made the exclamation Roy Kellerman said he made, 'My God, I'm hit.'" Donahue said.

Kellerman, a Secret Service agent, was riding in the front seat of the presidential limousine.

"Oswald's second shot was the so-called miracle bullet which pierced the president's back and throat and passed through Gov. (John) Connally,"

Donahue said.

"Unlikely as it may seem, the high velocity bullet would be easily capable of doing exactly what the Warren Report accepted as actuality," he said, adding that the president couldn't have spoken after being hit by the high velocity bullet. It shattered his larynx.

"Gov. Connally recovered from his wounds and I think the president could have, too, although possibly his voice might have been impaired," the gunsmith said.

In explaining the fatal shot, Donahue cites the testimony of S. M. Holland, an elderly man who saw the assassination from an overpass. Holland said he saw a Secret Service man stand up in the presidential car with a machine gun and stumble.

Donahue said he thinks the Secret Ser-

vice man who stood was in the follow-up car. The gunsmith said he feels others didn't see the man stand up with an automatic weapon because he could have been shielded by the other nine agents in the follow-up car.

"Did Oswald get off a third shot? If he did, it could have gone wild and the shot of it could have blended with the shot fired accidentally by a Secret Service man in the follow-up car," Donahue said. Donahue argued that the two bullets which struck the president weren't identical bullets fired from the same high-powered Italian rifle, as accepted by the Warren Commission.

The first round passed through Kennedy and Connally, shattering bones, but retaining its original shape. The se-

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JFK theory

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cond bullet, which inflicted the president's fatal head wound, didn't pass cleanly through. It blew Kennedy's skull apart.

Donahue said the second one performed like a soft or hollownosed bullet. He said it would be ideal for a bodyguard who might have to fire at someone in a crowd and didn't want to hit whoever stood behind his target. It would also immobilize a suspect instantly.

William Manchester's book "The Death of a President" refers to an AR-15 .223 automatic rifle lying on the back seat of the follow-up car. The Manchester book refers to an agent who "raises the barrel of the AR-15 and points it around aimlessly."

Donahue believes the automatic weapon was actually a M-16, which looks like an AR-15.

He also cited a report from a panel of four physicians who met in 1968 to analyze photographs, x-rays and other evidence on the assassination at the request of Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark.

The team of doctors included Dr. Russell S. Fisher, Maryland's chief medical examiner and a pathology professor at the University of Maryland, and Dr. Russell H. Morgan, a radiology professor at Johns Hopkins University.

They found that the second bullet entered Kennedy's skull four inches above the point accepted in the Warren Commission report, almost at the top of the skull.

After examining films of the assassination for the position of the president's head at the time of the second shot, Donahue concluded that the fatal, second bullet came from the left behind Kennedy. Oswald and the Texas Book Depository were to the right. Another factor in Donahue's theory is

former Sen. Ralph Yarborough's eyewitness account.

"I smelled the gunpowder ... It clung to the car nearly all of the way to the hospital," the former senator said, even though the president's car was 90 yards from the book depository.

Donahue said there is one bit of evidence which could go a long way to proving or disproving his theory: FBI spectrographic tests of bullet fragments taken from Kennedy's head. The tests could show whether one or more than one type of bullet hit the president.

The tapes have been hidden away in a secret location, Donahue said. "I think the American people have a right to know whatever story the tapes have to tell," he said.

Donahue's involvement with the 1963 assassination started with a 1967 CBS Television show in which he and other marksman fired the type of rifle Oswald is thought to have used under almost the same conditions.

Donahue was the only one to score three accurate shots during a 6.5 second period, the much disputed time Oswald is thought to have had to fire.