

GOVERNOR CONNALLY'S WOUNDS - TRAJECTORY; THE "FOUND" BULLET

Statements of Witnesses - Dr. Charles Francis GREGORY

Depositor -

March 23, 1964, 6 H 95-104

He is qualified and gives his training and experience prior to becoming professor of orthopedic surgery and chairman of that division at the Southwestern Medical School of the University of Texas. He has had considerable experience with gunshot wounds in the military service.

Dr. Shaw asked him to tend the wound on the Governor's wrist upon completion of the chest operation, which he did beginning about 4 o'clock. His work consumed 45-50 minutes and he was assisted by two junior orthopedic residents, Drs. William Osborne and John Parker. Neither was called to testify. He described the dorsal wrist wound as of about 2 cm. in length, ragged (p.97), and on the volar surface, about a centimeter and a half in length. After describing "debridement", he said, "In attending this wound, it was evident early that clot had been carried into the wound from the dorsal surface to the bone and into the fracture. This would imply that an irregular missile had passed through the wrist from the dorsal to the volar aspect." (p.98)

Note especially the implication of "an irregular missile".

And on the kinetic energy of the bullet:

"Dr. Gregory. ... It was my assumption that the missile had expended much of its remaining energy in passing through the radius bone, which it did before it could emerge through the soft tissues." (p.98)

Two or three metallic fragments were removed and "turned over to appropriate authorities for further disposition." They were small, and the largest dimension would probably not exceed 1/8 of an inch. (Larry, so much for the "unmutilated" bullet.)

Asked to speculate whether the 6.5 mm. bullet could have gone through the Governor's wrist as described leaving the described fragments and still "have virtually all the bullet missile intact, or having

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158 grains of a bullet at that time?" Of course, this means nothing unless 158 grains is compared with the pristine weight. Gregory, while saying he is not an expert on ballistics, points out he has had some experience and doesn't answer without "some knowledge of how much of the cartridge force might have been behind the missile". Specter then asks a similar question, again referring to "with 158 grains intact," and all Gregory will say is the size of the fragments that flaked off might have reduced its volume greatly. (p.98)

But in speculating about this particular bullet, he concluded, "as far as I could tell, ... it could be virtually intact, insofar as mass was concerned, but probably was distorted." He would not speculate on the weight of the fragments.

He saw the thigh wound which he described as "almost round and did not seem to have disturbed the tissues badly." But it "did definitely penetrate and pass through the skin and to the fascia beneath." X-rays did not reveal a missile of any magnitude. The size of the fragment remaining he described as about 1 x <sup>2</sup> mm. and as "much too small to have accounted for the dimensions of the wound....", about a centimeter in diameter. Asked what type of missile it would have taken to produce such a wound, he replied, "a fragment of metal approximately the same diameter - a centimeter, and in general - round," and a 6.5-mm. projectile could have done it. (p.99)

He is shown and identifies the report/<sup>he</sup>prepared at the completion of his operation (Exhibit 392) describing the Governor's treatment and recovery. When he is having difficulty recalling a date, he asks and gets permission to go off the record, following which he says that on or about February 14, the Governor saw him in Dallas when the cast was removed, an X-ray was made and a new cast applied. Before this deposi-

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tion, the Governor was again in Dallas, the cast was again removed and discontinued, and further X-rays were made.

He is then shown Gregory Exhibit No. 1 (20H32-6) (p.100). He says upon looking at Diagram 1, the entrance wound on the forearm was on the back rather than the front, a reversal of the representation on the diagram. He corrects it. Specter then asks if the angle of declination of the chest wound is approximately correct, and his answer is a qualified "yes" because he thought the point of entry might have been marked a little high. (Note: this was none of his operation.) He does not disagree with the location of the wound of exit, as did Dr. Shaw, and the inference in each case is that they were trying to get a less steep angle to conform to the theory they knew the Commission wanted to develop.

On Diagram 3, the wrist and thigh wounds are accurately depicted, and the chest ones are "more closely into line with their actual position".

Asked about the angle reflected in Diagram 4, he had the same reservation as with Diagram 2.

Then shown Diagram 5, a trajectory through a seated man, he says, "This is consistent with the point of entry which is depicted on the side views showing the angle of declination." Actually, this one seems to show a higher point of entry and a steeper angle. He then points out that the angle could be very simply altered by the motion of <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ few degrees. He then says he believes it possible <sup>for</sup> ~~that~~ one bullet to have inflicted all the wounds.

He is then asked, "what destruction was done on the fifth rib, Dr. Gregory?" Of course, he has no personal knowledge of this and could only quote Dr. Shaw, and Dr. Shaw was to appear twice before the Commission

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and its staff. But he said, "from conversations with Dr. Shaw, and I believe his medical reports bear this out, that .. fifth rib was literally shattered by the missile." (p.101. He continues: "We know that high velocity bullets striking bone have a strong tendency to shatter bones and the degree to which the fifth rib was shattered was considerably in excess of the amount of shattering which occurred in the radius - the forearm." (p.102)

He does not believe Gov. Connally was hit by two bullets but admits the possibility. He pointed out that "a high velocity missile in flight does not tend to carry organic material into the wound which it creates ... An irregular missile can carry debris into a wound and such debris was carried into the wound of the wrist. I would have expected that an undistorted high velocity missile striking the wrist would not have carried material into it." (p.103)

This explicit testimony resulted in the concoction of a theory when he was before the Commission that the bullet simply reversed itself in flight and went through the wrist and into the thigh back forwards. The bullet that hit the Governor in the right forearm, he said, was either one of lower initial energy or partially spent. If a missile of a velocity of 2,000 feet per second hit the forearm, it would have been "likely to blow it very nearly off ..."

He is then asked to speculate if one bullet could have passed through the President, hitting only soft tissue and then done all the damage to Gov. Connally (p.102).

He merely conceded the possibility. Asked "What would your professional opinion be ... whether or not that actually did happen in this situation?" He said, "I really couldn't formulate an objective opinion about it." He also thought that, after passing through the

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President, the bullet "would very probably have begun to tumble." He described tumbling as end over end motion. His conclusion: "These are only theoretical observations, but these are some of the reasons why I would believe that the missile in the Governor behaved as though it had never struck anything except him." (p.103)

Asked to speculate again about the bullet hitting both, he again replied: "I suspect it's possible, but I would say it would have to be a remarkably powerful missile to have done so." (p.103)

He had been previously interviewed by a Secret Service agent named Warren and briefly by a member of the FBI (p.103)

The nature of his deposition also required that Dr. Gregory be called before the Commission, as he subsequently was, to do what mending could be done.