

# Physician claims tests sup

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A New York physician who has investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy for more than eight years said Wednesday experiments made last year prove "without doubt" that the President was hit by two shots and both came from the right rear, precisely what the Warren Commission contended in 1964.

Dr. John K. Lattimer told The Times Herald in a telephone interview from his Columbia University office that he and his sons, Jon, 24, and Gary, 22, conducted a dozen experiments firing a Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 rifle (similar to that allegedly used by Lee Harvey Oswald from the Texas School Book Depository building) into targets designed to simulate a human skull and brain.

The Lattimers' findings were published in considerable detail in the current medical journal, "Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics."

In that article, Lattimer deals with one of the most pervasive theories propounded by Warren Commission critics who claim that because President Kennedy's head appears to jerk rapidly

backward (in the 8mm movie film taken by Abraham Zapruder), the fatal shot must have come from the front.

Lattimer said the President's head was thrown backward and to the left slightly because of "jet engine effect from the heavy brain material leaving the front of the head with explosive force."

This theory was first offered by Dr. Luis Alvarez, of the Department of Physics, University of California at Berkeley a few months ago.

Alvarez and his associates shot melons the size of a human head with a .30-caliber rifle and found that they caused an almost violent jet-like effect toward the front (exit hole) but pushed the melons backwards in every case.

Dr. Lattimer thought the experiment should be extended using the same type of weapon Oswald had and with ammunition manufactured by the same company that year. Without much trouble, he bought four of the Mannlicher-Carcanos for \$6 each and several hundred rounds of the ammunition from Western Cartridge Co.

And, they used not only melons, but human skull components and combinations of skulls and melons (sometimes

gelatin) — to see if Alvarez' theory held up.

"No melon or skull or combination ever fell away from the shooter in these multiple experiments in which President Kennedy's wound was duplicated accurately," Lattimer said.

This, said Lattimer, proved "that the backwards movement of the President's head was compatible with his being struck from the rear."

He said "a neurologic spasm" was also an element in the way the President's body moved. He added:

"When a brain in an intact, living, large animal is struck by a high speed military bullet, as in the case of President Kennedy, in whom most of the right side of the brain was destroyed by such a bullet and resulting cavitation, there is a massive downward discharge

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of neurologic impulses to every muscle in the body.

"The body then stiffens, with the strongest muscles predominating. These strongest muscles are the back muscles and the muscles in the back of the neck. The upper limbs react next.

"The President's head was bowed slightly forward at the moment of impact of the bullet which destroyed the right side.

"While his head was seen to move slightly forward for one frame of the Zapruder motion picture, the dominance of the stronger back and neck muscles would be expected to pull his head and thorax abruptly backward, toward an upright or even hyperextended position, only one frame later, 50 milliseconds.

"He was already leaning slightly to his left, so that combination of the

backward movement of his head from the jet engine effect described previously plus the stiffening and pulling upward and backward from the predominant contractions of his neck and back muscles could result in a backward lurch of his head and body, starting a frame after the bullet struck him."

Lattimer also studied the autopsy pictures and diagrams and interviewed several other doctors involved with the care and/or autopsy of the President.

Lattimer said it was the Warren Commission's own documents that led him to investigate further in the case. He said Thursday "discrepancies" found in the Warren Report about the exact location and severity of Kennedy's wounds led him to be skeptical of the overall analysis.

Later, he said, when he was given permission to examine all the evidence in the U.S. Archives, he found that the Commission artist who made the drawings had been forced to do so without benefit of having seen the body or even being permitted to see the photographs or roentgenograms of the body.

Combining the results of the Lattimers' tests with evidence that the roentgenograms show metallic fragments arranged only from back to front on the right side of his brain case, Lattimer said, "We are left with absolutely no indication that he was struck from the front or right-front, as claimed by recent critics."

"Those who tell you the shots came from the front are either selling a book or running for some political office," Lattimer added.