

JFK shot ^{11/22/63} _{SDN} from back, tests show

WASHINGTON (AP) — Independent tests confirmed the Warren Commission's finding that President John F. Kennedy was shot from the back and not the front, a New York City physician said Wednesday.

The findings of Dr. John K. Lattimer contradict the publicly stated belief of Rep. Thomas Downing, chairman of the House Assassination Committee, that Kennedy was shot from the front.

Tuesday night, Downing signed about 10 subpoenas to be issued in connection with his committee's investigation of the Kennedy slaying and that of Dr. Martin Luther King, a spokesman said. No details about the subpoenas were available.

Downing bases his belief that Kennedy was shot from the front on a film of the assassination which shows Kennedy being jolted violently backward and to the left at the moment he is shot. The Warren Commission said the bullet was fired by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Downing contends the backward motion indicates the bullet struck Kennedy in the front, meaning a second assassin was present in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

But Lattimer, chairman of the Urology Department at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, showed films of experiments he conducted by firing a rifle identical to the one used by Oswald into the back of an animal skull. Each time the shot produced the same backward motion seen in the film of the Kennedy assassination.

That motion was the result of a jet recoil effect caused by the explosion of the entire right front of Kennedy's head, Lattimer told a National Press Club luncheon.

Kennedy's movement "in no way implies that he was shot from the front right," Lattimer said. Lattimer's findings parallel those of government physicians who reexamined the Kennedy autopsy materials in 1967 and again in 1975. Lattimer was the first non-government physician to be given access to the autopsy materials.

Dr. Cyril Wecht, another physician who has examined the autopsy materials, has said he agrees with the Warren Commission finding that Kennedy was struck from the rear. But Wecht contends the angle at which the bullets entered Kennedy's body made it impossible for them to have been fired by Oswald from his location on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

Kennedy was struck twice, first in the neck and then in the head. Lattimer said the first shot alone, which injured Kennedy's spine and pierced his windpipe, probably would have been fatal.