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March 27, 1964

By Courier Service

*W. E. Myke*  
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 FBI - READING ROOM

Honorable J. Lee Rankin  
 General Counsel  
 The President's Commission  
 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast  
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Rankin:

The remaining three bullets from Officer J. D. Tippit's body were recently received from the Dallas Police Department and have been designated as C251, C252 and C253 in the Laboratory for identification purposes. These three bullets have been examined in the Laboratory and the results of the examinations are set forth below.

The C251 bullet is a caliber .38 Special copper-coated lead bullet of Winchester-Western manufacture. This bullet weighs 154.1 grains and was fired from a barrel rifled with five lands and grooves, right twist.

The C252 bullet is a caliber .38 Special lead bullet of Remington-Peters manufacture. This bullet weighs 154.8 grains. It was fired from a barrel rifled with five lands and grooves, right twist.

The C253 bullet is a copper-coated lead bullet of Winchester-Western manufacture. This bullet weighs 155.7 grains and was fired from a barrel rifled with five lands and grooves, right twist.

A portion of the surface of each bullet, C251, C252 and C253, is mutilated; however, microscopic marks remain on these bullets for comparison purposes. The C251, C252 and C253 bullets were compared with each other and with test bullets obtained from Oswald's revolver, C15, the .38 Special Smith and Wesson revolver, Serial No. V510210, Assembly No. 65248.

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NOTE: See memo 3/26/64, R. H. Jevons to  
 ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT

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Honorable J. Lee Rankin

No conclusion could be reached as to whether or not C251 through C253 were fired from the same weapon or whether or not they were fired from C15. In addition, it was found that even consecutive .38 Special bullets test fired from the C15 revolver could not be identified with each other. In this connection, it should be noted that the barrel of C15 was designed for .38 S & W bullets and, therefore, it is slightly larger in diameter than barrels designed for .38 Special bullets. Firing of undersized bullets could cause erratic passage of the bullets down the barrel, resulting in individual microscopic characteristics which are not consistent. The barrel of the weapon could also be changing due to the accumulation of lead in the barrel or to wear. That one or both of the above conditions existed is apparent from the fact that consecutive .38 Special test bullets obtained from the C15 revolver could not be identified with each other.

Smith and Wesson revolvers such as C15 are among the weapons producing general rifling characteristics of the type found on C251, C252 and C253.

The lead alloy of the C251, C253 and C13 (the first bullet submitted by the Dallas Police Department in the Tippit case) Winchester-Western copper-coated bullets was spectrographically examined. This lead alloy was found to be qualitatively similar in composition to the lead alloy of the Western copper-coated bullets in the C51, C52, C55, C56, C57, C58, C59 and C137 cartridges. It is noted that these cartridges were among those obtained from the C15 revolver, Lee Harvey Oswald's pocket and the U. S. Secret Service.

The lead alloy comprising the C252 Remington-Peters bullet was spectrographically examined and found to be qualitatively similar in composition to the lead alloy comprising the Remington-Peters bullets in the C53, C54 and C138 cartridges, the remaining cartridges from the above sources.

There are attached photographs of the three bullets.

Sincerely yours,

L. Edgar Hoover

Enclosures (3)