

Reno Is Urged to Recover Bullet Pieces From Connally

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By George Lardner Jr.
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John F. Kennedy assassination researchers asked the Justice Department yesterday to try to recover bullet fragments from the body of the late Texas governor John B. Connally before he is buried.

Connally was wounded while riding with President Kennedy when he was killed in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. The Warren Commission concluded that one shot hit both men almost simultaneously before Kennedy was hit by another, fatal bullet.

In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, the head of the non-profit Assassination Archives and Research Center, James H. Lesar, said that if this one bullet did not cause all the wounds the two sustained before the fatal shot, "then more than one assassin must have hit the president." Lesar pointed out that Connally himself maintained that he and Kennedy were hit by separate bullets.

Lesar was joined in his request by Cyril Wecht, a forensic pathologist and longtime critic of the Warren Commission's work, and five other doctors. They said that neutron activation analysis and other tests of the fragments "may be able to resolve the controversy as to whether President Kennedy was assassinated as the result of a conspiracy."

The "single bullet" theory is crucial to the Warren Commission's findings because one gunman could not have wounded both Kennedy and Connally with separate shots in the chaotic, split-second interval when they were hit.

Tests for the House assassinations committee in 1978 matched fragments of metal taken from Connally's wrist with the nearly intact bullet that was found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital and was believed to have dropped out of Connally's thigh. But questions about the authenticity of those fragments arose because they did not match any of the fragments tested years earlier, and inconclusively, by the FBI. The FBI fragments had disappeared.

Other fragments were not removed from Connally. The researchers said they knew their request "may seem inappropriate" to Connally's bereaved family and friends, but they argued that the public interest "is paramount" and that it is Reno's duty "to recover evidence of a crime."

Justice Department spokesman Carl Stern said the request was forwarded to the FBI's Dallas Field Office for a determination. "If they feel this is important," Stern said, "they presumably would have some discussions with the [Connally] family. Obviously we want to proceed as sensitively as possible."

assassination.
That bullet was one-fourth inch in diameter, Mr. Weisberg said, and all that was missing from it was material which weighed about the same as a postage stamp.

"I want to bring some pressure to bear" on those who are in a position to remove the fragments, he said. "It's in the national interest."

Mr. Weisberg also is concerned that if the evidence is buried "it will spawn more ugly rumors" about the assassination, "which wouldn't be unmitigated."

right armpit. . . . The bullet came out his right wrist, shattering it, and supposedly entered his left thigh."

"This is fiction," said the man who scoffs at the official "single bullet" explanation for both the president's and Mr. Connally's wounds. Mr. Weisberg has said he believes "beyond question" the assassination was a conspiracy.

He said the recovered fragments should be weighed and measured and an analysis made, comparing them with the bullet which was recovered in the Dallas hospital after the

going to hurt him now and it would only be a slight cost," Mr. Weisberg said. "It is important to the nation's integrity and history."

From the countless reports and documents, plus interviews he has conducted through the years, Mr. Weisberg said he is sure bullet fragments would be found in Mr. Connally's chest and also his thigh.

"All the reports disagree," he said, but the "official fiction is that the president was shot (once) in the back of the neck. . . . It exited the front

avoid another national tragedy" of letting important evidence on the assassination disappear, said Harold Weisberg, 80, of Old Receiver Road, Frederick.

Mr. Weisberg has written six books on the JFK killing and frequently is a source used by the national media on the subject. Much of the material he has gathered came only after battles with the FBI and other agencies as he pushed for documents through the Freedom of Information Act.

One of the country's leading authorities on President Kennedy's assassination urged Wednesday that bullet fragments remaining in John Connally's body be recovered before he is buried.

Mr. Connally, who was riding in a car with Mr. Kennedy when the president was shot in Dallas nearly 30 years ago, died Tuesday of pulmonary fibrosis.

Weisberg: Remove bullet fragments from Connally

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