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MDs agree one gunman killed JFK

By Jim Adams
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WASHINGTON — Eight medical experts yesterday supported the Warren Commission's conclusion that there was only one gunman in John F. Kennedy's assassination, asserting that it was possible that a single bullet passed through the President and struck John Connally.

A ninth pathologist agreed with the others that Kennedy was shot from behind, but said that he could not rule out the possibility that a gunman other than Lee Harvey Oswald was involved.

The dissenter, Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, coroner of Allegheny County, Pa., said that he could not subscribe to the so-called magic-bullet theory — that one bullet could have gone through Kennedy's neck and then struck John Connally.

The single bullet theory is crucial because without it the Warren Commission would have been faced with the question of the source of another bullet in addition to the three that it said Oswald fired.

"Once you eliminate the single-bullet theory, you're in the area of two persons involved," Wecht said. "You're in the area of conspiracy. You're in the area of coup d'etat. And the government cannot allow that conclusion."

But Dr. Michael Baden, speaking for the medical panel, told the committee that all nine experts agreed that Kennedy had been shot with two bullets from behind, the second of which shattered his skull.

Baden said that all the experts except Wecht also agreed with the Warren Commission's conclusion that the first bullet, which passed through Kennedy's neck, could have traveled on to pass through Connally's shoulder and wrist, settling in his thigh.

Baden, New York City's chief med-

ical examiner, displayed Kennedy's black coat and bloody shirt; Connally's black suit and shirt, and photographs, drawings and X-rays to show the paths that the doctors said the two bullets took.

He said all nine experts agreed that the second bullet was fired from behind and above. He said that the experts also agreed that the first bullet, which passed through the President's neck, came from behind, but that they could not tell whether it came from above or below.

That conclusion is contrary to theories that some shots came from the side of the presidential motorcade or from in front of Kennedy, particularly from the grassy knoll to his right.

It supports the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald alone killed Kennedy, firing three shots—one of which missed—from a sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository behind Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

Baden, raising a new issue, said that all nine experts agreed that the second bullet entered Kennedy's scalp four inches higher than was reported by three doctors who conducted an autopsy.

He said that the three doctors had not changed their opinion, that photographs of the wound and X-rays of Kennedy's scalp showed that they were wrong. He suggested that the three mistook a piece of brain tissue left on the President's hairline as the entry wound.

Baden told the committee if the entry wound were four inches higher, it would confirm that Kennedy's head was relatively erect, as films show it was when the second bullet hit him.

Baden also displayed a Warren Commission drawing that indicates, contrary to the films, that Kennedy's head was bent sharply forward when he was hit.

Baden said the autopsy also had the entry wound of the first bullet, through Kennedy's neck, two inches too low. He also said the experts agreed that the first bullet could have wounded Connally because the bullet that hit the then Texas governor was wobbling as though it already had hit something else.

But dissenter Wecht said Kennedy and Connally were not lined up in such a way that they could have been

hit by the same bullet.

"You've got a bullet that turns in midair and then comes down," Wecht said. "It's dipping like a roller coaster."

Wecht disagreed with the Warren Commission's conclusion that the first bullet hit both men, saying that that bullet was not as damaged as it would have been if it had first hit Kennedy and then broken one of Connally's ribs and smashed his wrist.