

No conspiracy behind assassination

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eight medical experts backed the Warren Commission's conclusion that there was no conspiracy behind John F. Kennedy's assassination, asserting Thursday it was possible 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 he could not rule out the possibility that a second gunman other than Lee Harvey Oswald was involved.

The dissenter, Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, said he could not subscribe to the so-called "magic bullet" theory — that one bullet could have gone through Kennedy's neck and then struck Connally, critically wounding him.

"Once you eliminate the single-bullet theory, you're in the area of two persons involved," said Wecht. "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, spokesman for the medical panel, told the committee that all nine experts agreed that Kennedy was shot with two bullets from behind — the second of which shattered his skull.

Baden said 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 enter

Connally's shoulder and wrist, settling in his thigh.

Baden displayed Kennedy's black coat and still-bloody shirt; Connally's black suit and shirt, and photographs, drawings and X-rays to show the path both bullets took on Nov. 22, 1963, the day of the assassination.

He said all nine experts agreed that the second bullet, which exploded Kennedy's skull, was fired from behind and above — where the commission concluded that Oswald fired all shots from the Texas School Book Depository.

Baden, New York City's chief medical examiner, said the experts also agreed that the first bullet, which passed through the president's neck, came from behind, but could not tell whether it came from above or below.

The expert testimony disputes theories that some shots came from the side of the presidential motorcade or in front of Kennedy, particularly from the grassy knoll to his right.

It supports the commission's conclusion that Oswald killed Kennedy alone, firing three shots — one of which missed — from a sixth-floor window behind Kennedy.

Baden, raising a new controversy, said all nine experts agree the second bullet entered Kennedy's scalp four inches higher than reported by a trio of doctors who conducted the original autopsy.

He said the three doctors still think they were right. But Baden said blowups of photographs of the wound and X-rays of Kennedy's scalp show they were wrong. He suggested the tree mistook a piece of brain tissue left on to the president's hair line as the entry wound.