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Warren Panel Findings Backed On JFK Wounds

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A panel of pathologists that studied the autopsy evidence in the death of John F. Kennedy said today it has concluded the president was wounded in the head and back by two bullets that entered his body from the rear and exited at the front.

Testifying before the House Assassinations Committee, Dr. Michael Baden, chairman of the independent panel, said it reached essentially the same conclusions as the Warren Commission about the bullet wounds that killed the president on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas.

No reference was made in Baden's testimony to theories about a second gunman firing from in front of the president or from another location.

Baden used a series of X-rays, close-up photos of the president's wounds and medical drawings to describe to the committee how the panel believes the president was struck and from what direction. He had access to many materials that have been kept from the public eye at the National Archives since after the autopsy was performed at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

THE COMMITTEE also brought forth the dark gray coat, shirt and tie Kennedy was wearing when he was killed. The front of the president's coat had been torn away at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Baden said, during the effort to save his life.

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Chairman Louis Stokes pointed out that the actual photos taken at the autopsy are under seal at the Archives, but he said the committee saw them last night.

BADEN SAID the essential conclusions of the panel were agreed upon by eight of the nine panelists. Dr. Cyril Wecht, who disagreed with some of the conclusions, was to testify later today.

Baden said, as did the Warren Commission, that Kennedy died of two gunshot wounds at the back of his body in the head and neck. First he demonstrated a drawing of the president's back showing a hole in the upper right part of the back and then an enlargement of this wound. Baden said the panel concluded that this perforation in the president's back was a gunshot entry wound.

Then the president's tattered coat and shirt were brought forth and Dr. Baden said there is a perforation in the back of the coat and shirt that corresponds to the hole in Kennedy's upper back.

Baden also described in detail, with medical drawings, how the bullet that came into Kennedy's back had emerged through his lower throat and that the throat wound had been enlarged by an incision made by doctors trying to save his life. He noted that the X-rays show that the neck and back wound produced an irregularity in one portion of Kennedy's spine, which the panel concluded was a fracture of the vertebrae.

Baden pointed out the details of a tracheotomy performed on the president at Parkland Hospital, but he also showed the committee a semicircular defect in the lower portion of the throat wound. "It is apparent that there was a perforation at the front of the neck and that the tracheotomy made there changed the hole from round to elongated," Baden testified.

Discussing the wound in the front of the president's throat, Baden said it was characteristic of a wound of exit. He said every member of the panel concluded that one bullet went through the president's back and emerged through his throat.

TURNING TO the president's head wound, which caused Kennedy's skull to virtually explode under the impact of the bullet, Baden showed a drawing which appeared to show a small bullet

wound of entrance in the back. He said the panel learned from X-rays and photos that there was an extensive fracture of the skull bones and displacement of bone as a result of the explosive action of the bullet.

"The panel concluded that there is an entrance wound in the head, that the track of the bullet went from back to front extensively damaging President Kennedy's head," Baden testified.

Baden said the panel did disagree on some points with the Warren Commission. One involved a color drawing made for the Warren Commission showing a back-to-front trajectory of the neck wound suffered by the president. Asked if the drawing was accurate, Baden said, "not precisely. We found that the entrance perforation is higher by two inches than in the Warren Commission exhibit."

The panel also disagreed with the Warren Commission evidence about where the fatal bullet entered Kennedy's head. Baden said the head wound sustained by Kennedy penetrated his head in the vicinity of the cowlick, a good four inches higher than the findings of the Warren Commission indicated.

Baden said this is demonstrated by the amount of damage to the upper portion of the president's brain. He noted that the cerebellum and the lower part of Kennedy's brain were not injured by the bullet.

Baden said it is the panel's firm conclusion that there was only one wound in the president's head and that it came from a higher angle than the Warren Commission believed.

TODAY'S TESTIMONY, despite these discrepancies about where the head and back wounds were sustained, gives no support to theories about another gunman firing from a point facing the motorcade.

Baden also said the panel concluded that the bullet that penetrated the president's back and exited from his throat was the bullet that hit Gov. Connally in his wrist and thigh. His testimony was that the so-called "pristine" bullet found on the stretcher at Parkland Hospital is the same bullet that passed through both the president and the governor. He noted, "this bullet is significantly flattened at one end and is not in a virgin state. Obviously it was a spent bullet that had passed through something else first and a bullet that lost its full force."

Funds Narrowly OK'd For Assassination Panel

The House Administration Committee today proved an additional \$790,000 for the select committee investigating the assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. vote was 9-8.

Chairman Frank Thompson Jr., D-N.J., to committee he had been assured by Rep. Stokes, chairman of the Assassinations Committee, that this will be the last funding for the panel, which already has spent more than a million.

A number of lawmakers who originally creation of the select committee argued the Administration Committee should have approved the \$790,000 request so it could not be blamed for perking the panel's investigations.