

Expert says single bullet wounded JFK, Connally

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WASHINGTON—An Army ballistics expert Friday told a House committee in vivid detail of tests involving gelatin-filled skulls and live animals used by researchers investigating the gunshots that killed John F. Kennedy.

Ballistics expert Larry Sturdivan told the House Assassinations Committee the evidence supported the Warren Commission's finding that one bullet probably passed through the president's body and continued on to grievously wound Texas Gov. John Connally.

The assassinations panel concentrated in its third day of hearings on the Nov. 22, 1963, killing in Dallas on the weapons involved and particularly on the key question of whether a single bullet could have hit both Kennedy and Connally and emerged almost unmarked.

IF THEY were struck by separate bullets, the theory of more than one gunman would be given major support.

Sturdivan showed films of ballistic experiments he performed for the Warren Commission, including shooting low- and high-velocity bullets through blocks of gelatin.

He told the committee "no bullet goes straight when it enters a solid mass," which could account for the missile's change of trajectory in hitting both Kennedy and Connally.

Some of the bullets deviated within the gelatin by as much as 90 degrees. Others disintegrated.

OTHER FILMS showed bullets being fired at gelatin-filled human skulls, the back of which were covered with goat skin to simulate human tissue and hair.

The bullets, fired from Lee Harvey Oswald's own 6.5-mm Mannlicher-Carcano rifle and a similar firearm, created the same explosive effect as the shot that killed the president.

Large fragments of skull exploded upwards and forwards.

IN THE FILMS the skulls, which were unattached to any vertebrae, moved forward.

A film of Kennedy's shooting shows his head jerking backward, which some conspiracy theorists believe indicates the president was also shot from in front.

However, Sturdivan cited 30-year-old Army films, some of them involving the shooting of live goats, indicating the rearward movement of Kennedy's head could also well have been caused by "neuro-muscular response."

Committee member Rep. Samuel Devine, R-Ohio, asked: "You are not troubled that the President's head moved in a posterior direction from the direction from which the bullet was fired?"

Sturdivan replied, "No, sir."