

'Extensive Injury' to the Brain Is Shown in Kennedy Autopsy

By TERRY ROBARDS
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LOS ANGELES, June 6—Senator Robert F. Kennedy died as a result of a gunshot that penetrated his brain and scattered bullet fragments and bone tissue through the midbrain and cerebrum, according to an autopsy report issued today.

Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi, chief medical examiner and coroner of Los Angeles County, said his examination of Mr. Kennedy's brain "demonstrated extensive injury." He spoke at a news conference at the Los Angeles Hall of Justice.

Dr. Noguchi, who was assisted by two deputy coroners and their doctors from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, declined to state whether the injury was so extensive that Mr. Kennedy's mental faculties would have been permanently impaired had he lived.

"The fragments were so tiny it is remarkable that the neurosurgeons were able to maintain the Senator's condition until the last minute," he said.

He said X-rays indicated fragments had penetrated the cerebrum, the portion of the brain that controls mental activity, including voluntary action and sensory factors. Earlier reports from Good Samaritan Hospital, where Mr. Kennedy died at 1:44 A.M., indicated that only the mid-brain area had been damaged. The coroner, said also that a cerebellar artery was damaged. The cerebellar arteries supply blood to the cerebellum, the portion of the brain responsible for the coordination of muscles and maintenance of body equilibrium.

Dr. Noguchi said a second bullet was recovered from the back of the lower neck, just beneath the skin. This bullet,

he said, entered Mr. Kennedy's body just behind the right armpit and passed upward through soft tissue and muscle structure.

No cervical vertebrae were damaged, and this wound probably would not have proved fatal, he said. The bullet from the second wound was removed and turned over to the Los Angeles police.

Dr. Noguchi said it could not be determined which bullet entered Mr. Kennedy's body first.

He said there was evidence of damage to the Senator's brain stem, although this was caused by pressure rather than penetration of the bullet.

Complete findings of the autopsy will not be available for perhaps several weeks, he said, because extensive microscopic examinations must be made of the brain and of Mr. Kennedy's vital organs. He said, however, that he was satisfied that the cause of death had been determined.

The complete report, he said, will be prepared following an "exhaustive review and consultation with other members of the medical team."

The two members of the autopsy team from Dr. Noguchi's staff were Dr. John Holloway, an expert in forensic pathology, and Dr. Abraham M. Lu, a specialist in neuropathology.

The three pathologists from Washington were identified as Col. Pierre Fink of the Army, Lieut. Comdr. Donald C. Stahl of the Navy and Dr. Kenneth Earle.

Dr. Noguchi said he had invited them to participate so as to make certain there would be no questions about the results of the examination.