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JFK autopsy (370)

By Frank Carey

Associated Press Science Writer

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 (AP)—The White House has so far declined to say whether an autopsy was performed on the body of slain President John F. Kennedy.

For approximately nine hours, the body was at Bethesda, Md., Naval Hospital last Friday night and early Saturday morning. Civilian morticians were called to the hospital to prepare the body for burial.

Though there has been no report of an autopsy, pathologists not connected with the case have speculated along these lines:

That Kennedy's spinal cord and some vital nerve tracts near the base of his brain may have been badly damaged by the bullet or bullets that struck him.

This, they said, could have caused the President's death by impeding and eventually shutting off the nerve centers of the brain that control breathing and heart action.

Doctors in Dallas who administered emergency treatment to the President said today they do not know whether one or two bullets had hit him.

However, federal authorities seemed fairly certain that two bullets struck Kennedy.

One Washington source said, "There is some doubt whether the fatal bullet was the second shot or the third shot. The first shot is believed to have hit the President, but we're not sure about the second and third."

Thus, he indicated that the first bullet to strike Kennedy might not have been fatal.

One bullet struck Texas Gov. John Connally, wounding him severely.

Dr. Kemp Clark, a brain surgeon who was summoned to the emergency room of the Dallas hospital where the President was taken after the shooting, said in Dallas today that a bullet did such massive damage at the right rear of the President's head that the attending surgeon could not tell whether it had entered or come out of the head there.

"A missile had gone in, or out of the back of his head, causing extensive lacerations and loss of brain tissue," Clark said.

Clark said he was unable to say whether the wound in the President's neck, below the Adam's apple, was due to the same bullet that had coursed through the President's brain. He said there could have been two bullets.

Dr. Malcolm Perry of Dallas, who also treated the President after the shooting, had said on Friday that he was unable to determine whether one or two bullets were involved.

No bullets were removed at the Dallas hospital.

Officials at the Naval hospital in Bethesda decline to say whether an autopsy was performed.

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