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Medical Details Of JFK Death Are Revealed

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DALLAS — The Dallas doctor who performed emergency surgery on Texas Gov. John Connally said yesterday that authorities have been able to reconstruct the sequence of shots that killed President Kennedy last Friday.

Eye-witness accounts by Gov. Connally and Mrs. Connally, and a Polaroid picture taken by a spectator, reveal that the President was killed by the third shot, the bullet that tore away a piece of his skull.

DR. ROBERT R. SHAW, chairman of the Department of Thoracic Surgery at Parkland Memorial Hospital, said here yesterday that the President was "medically dead" the instant he was hit in the skull.

Shaw said that medical authorities here felt that the first shot that hit the President, a bullet in the front of his throat which lodged in his right lung, was not a mortal wound but was one which, with proper care, the President could have sustained.

This was the manner in which the murderous assault tore into the back of the President's limousine, Shaw said.

"THE FIRST BULLET entered President Kennedy's trachea, in the front of his neck, tearing downward into his right lung.

The bullet was removed in Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, where an autopsy was performed.

"Gov. Connally states he turned, saw the President slumping, then he felt a terrific blow to his right shoulder which stunned him. That was the second shot.

"The governor then was conscious of a dull explosion, the shot that struck the President and went through his skull, killing him.

"We know that the first shot went through his throat because authorities have a Polaroid picture, taken by a spectator right after the first shot. It shows the President slumping, his head is intact, undisturbed.

"Additionally, Mrs. Connally said the third shot struck the President in the head.

DR. SHAW ADMITTED he was "a little baffled" by the first

shot. "The assassin was behind him, yet the bullet entered at the front of his neck. Mr. Kennedy must have turned to his left to talk to Mrs. Kennedy or to wave to someone," Dr. Shaw said.

Dr. Shaw was very careful to say that the President technically was alive when his speeding limousine arrived at the hospital minutes after the shooting.

"But medically he was dead when the bullet tore off a piece of his skull," he said. "It's true that he was gasping in agony and there was a faint heart beat, but the breathing was impulsive and a heart can beat even after it is removed from a body. The doctors took one look and knew there was no hope."

DR. WILLIAM KEMP CLARK, the neurosurgeon who headed a team of 12 medical men in a desperate effort to save President Kennedy, said the President arrived at Parkland Hospital "in a final agony."

"A very large piece of his skull was blown away," Dr. Clark said. "It was one great big hole. It was through this wound his brain extruded and blood poured profusely."

Dr. Clark said he did not see the throat wound, but some of the other doctors felt the President had sustained two wounds, one in his throat and one in his head.

The neurosurgeon said all the doctors saw the head wound.

"ALL AGREED THIS was the lethal wound," he said.

Dr. Clark was reluctant to talk about the neck wound, which he did not personally observe, because three other surgeons were performing a tracheotomy, but Dr. Shaw said: "They didn't have to widen the column much, they just followed the course of the bullet."

The almost-unbearable irony of the assassination Friday grew even deeper yesterday.

R. S. Truly, superintendent of the Texas School Book Depository, the man who hired Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused slayer of the President, said he was positive Kennedy's limousine "zigged to the left" after the second shot, in an effort to get the President out from under the deadly rifle fire.

It was the third shot, according to Dr. Shaw, that snuffed out Kennedy's life.