

SF Chron 17 Dec. 1963

The President's Wounds: 'First One Non-Fatal'

Washington

President Kennedy was shot twice, both times from the rear.

He could readily have survived the first bullet, which was found deep in his shoulder.

The second bullet to hit the President, however, tore off the right rear portion of his head so destructively as to be "completely incompatible with life."

FRAGMENT

A fragment was deflected and passed out the front of the throat, creating an erroneous belief that he may have been shot from two angles.

Those are the findings of the pathologists who performed the autopsy on the President's body the night of November 22 at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Their report is still not official.

The first shot, hitting him high in the back shoulder, caused a hematoma (a pooling of blood) inside the neck

and shoulder muscles, but no and first to examine the critical harm.

The fatal bullet smashed off the lower right back side (occipito-parietal region) of the head. As far as public understanding of the subject is concerned, the wound was instantly fatal.

MOVEMENTS

The President, however, still showed some physical movements of life on his arrival at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, and was not officially pronounced dead until 22 minutes later.

The disclosure that a bullet hit the President in the back shoulder, five to seven inches below the collar line, came as a complete surprise to doctors at the Dallas hospital.

The President, they said, was on his back from the moment he was brought into the hospital until the body was covered with a sheet after the death pronouncement.

Dr. James Carrico, the hospital's resident in surgery

President, confirmed the fact that the back wound was not observed.

As to the President's condition on arrival, he said that he showed "slow, agonal respiratory efforts, with occasional heart movement discernible on auscultation (listening).

Dr. Carrico also added that from the moment the President was taken into the hospital until the body was covered, the pupils of his eyes remained dilated and fixed. That is sometimes called the stare of death.

The Dallas doctors admittedly were in disagreement. Some believed the President had been shot twice, the neck wound being from a glancing hit. But one of the surgeons explained over television that he was shot only once, and that a fragment from the bullet that hit his head coursed downward and emerged through the front of the throat.

Times-Post Service