

DALLAS CORONER BACKS WARREN PANEL

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Dallas' chief medical examiner told the House Assassinations Committee today there is no evidence John F. Kennedy was shot from the front or the side.

Dr. Charles Petty, a clinical and forensic pathology expert, categorically rejected theories that Kennedy and former Texas Gov. John B. Connally may have been fired upon by a second gunman positioned ahead of the motorcade or to one side. He gave further support to the Warren Commission's findings that all the wounds inflicted on the president and the governor were fired from behind.

Petty was asked by Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C., whether he believed the "single-bullet" theory is valid. This is the official theory that one bullet passed through President Kennedy's back, emerged from his throat, struck Gov. Connally in the chest and wrist, and finally lodged in his thigh.

PETTY TESTIFIED he believed Kennedy and Connally were hit by the same bullet — a missile that was not fatal to either of them.

"I believe they were struck by the same bullet. To sum up the flight of that bullet, I believe that the bullet penetrated the president's neck without striking any bone or hard material and when it exited the president's throat was travelling upward in anatomical terms," Dr. Petty declared.

"That was because the president was not sitting bolt upright when he was shot. This explains how the bullet went downward till it hit the president, turned upward when it hit him and then turned down again when it entered the body of Gov. Connally. The bullet struck no bones. It did not go through the spinal column of either man, but rather passed through soft material which did not cause the bullet to break into fragments.

"The second object the bullet struck was Gov. Connally. The bullet did not make right angle turns but penetrated the governor's chest near the armpit and followed the line of one of his ribs until it exited near the right nipple. The bullet did not penetrate Gov. Connally's lung but it did shatter his fifth rib as it followed the slope of that part of the rib."

Petty said the bullet then struck the back of the governor's wrist and passed out through the front of his wrist. Bullet substances were found in Connally's wrist, Petty testified, indicating that it was here the bullet began to be deformed.

"Then the bullet passed in and out of Gov. Connally's thigh at low velocity.

YESTERDAY Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, coroner of Allegheny County, Pa., challenged this theory. He dissented from the findings of a panel of nine pathologists retained by the House Assassinations Committee.

Although Wecht agreed with the other panelists that Kennedy was shot from behind, he said "no single bullet could have caused all these wounds. I believe four shots were most probably fired, and I believe that Kennedy and Connally were struck by

three of them. I believe the president was struck twice, once in the back and once in the head.

"I believe Connally was hit by another bullet," he said, adding he believed the fourth bullet may not have been found.

THE COMMITTEE today screened experimental films depicting what bullets from a 6.5 millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano rifle like that of Lee Harvey Oswald did to four human skulls.

Larry Sturdivan, a ballistics physicist at the Army's Aberdeen, Md., proving ground, showed films of Oswald-type bullets striking four dried human skulls that had been filled with gelatin and covered with patches goat skin to simulate hair. In the tests, carried out for the Warren Commission in 1964, the skulls exploded when struck by the bullets travelling at 2,000 feet per second.

Sturdivan testified and demonstrated that bullets fired into nothing more solid than gelatin tend to change direction.

Asked whether the president could have been hit by exploding bullets, Sturdivan said he did not think it was possible to tell the difference between the effect of an exploding bullet or one with a hard jacket such as was fired from the Oswald rifle. He said he did not feel the president was hit by an exploding bullet.

Sturdivan said that the tests that were conducted through blocks of gelatin emerged pristine or unmarked, but that bullets fired through the carcass of a goat were slightly deformed by the impact.

G. Robert Blakey, the committee counsel, said the committee analyzed the Edgewood tests and considered having a series of its own conducted. But a private contractor said efforts to duplicate the assassination would always be subject to question because no material reacts in the exact manner of human tissue when fired into.