

MEDICINE

Kennedy Alive in Hospital

The head wound President Kennedy received was fatal and although he was technically alive when he reached the hospital, his condition was hopeless.

► **PRESIDENT KENNEDY** was alive technically, but his condition was hopeless from the time he reached Parkland Hospital in Dallas, between five and ten minutes after he was shot in the head.

Compared to the treatment given President Lincoln after his assassination at close range by a shot in the head, nearly 100 years before, the care given to President Kennedy was more modern but equally of no avail.

Even in President Lincoln's time, his doctor tried to establish circulation by a fore-runner of the closed chest massage. He also tried to establish an open airway to the lungs and carried out the artificial respiration method then in vogue.

President Kennedy was blue-white or ashen in color, Dr. Charles J. Carrico, a resident in general surgery, who was the first physician to see him, observed.

The slow, spasmodic, agonal respiration without any coordination led Dr. Carrico to attempt to improve the President's breathing. Dr. Malcolm O. Perry arrived in the room a few minutes after the President was taken there, and in three to five minutes he performed a tracheotomy, or surgical opening in the windpipe.

Knowing that there was already a kidney insufficiency, Dr. Carrico gave the President hydrocortisone, and while the tracheotomy was being performed, Drs. Carrico and Ronald Jones made cutdowns on the right

leg and left arm to infuse blood and liquids into the circulatory system.

Other doctors joined in efforts to revive the President. His own physician, Admiral George Burkley, arrived at the hospital after emergency treatment was under way and concluded that anything he might do would interfere with the action of the team.

In the absence of any neurological, muscular or heart response, all the doctors agreed that further efforts were hopeless.

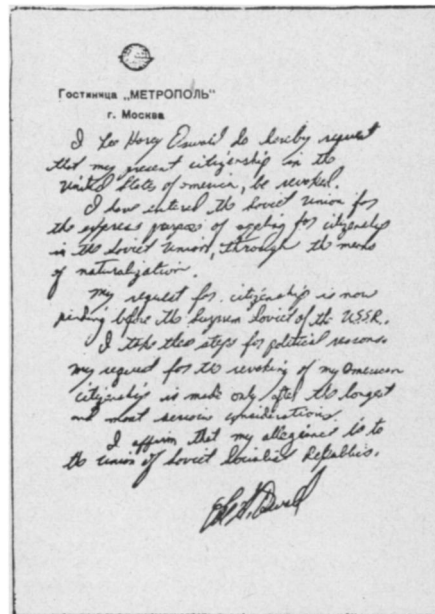
Of the two bullet wounds, one in the back of the neck and the other shattering the back of the skull, the President could have survived the first, but the head wound was fatal.

The Warren report explained why the doctors did not turn the President over, allowing him to remain on his back throughout his medical treatment at the hospital.

Dr. Carrico testified that in trying to treat an acutely injured patient, you have to establish an airway, adequate ventilation and circulation. "Before this was accomplished the President's cardiac activity had ceased and closed cardiac massage was instituted, which made it impossible to inspect his back."

Asked why there was no later effort at the hospital to inspect his back, Dr. Carrico replied, "I suppose nobody really had the heart to do it."

• Science News Letter, 86:229 October 10, 1964



Warren Commission

EXHIBIT NO. 913 — Note handed by Oswald to the American Embassy in Moscow on Oct. 31, 1959.

GENERAL SCIENCE

Models of Head Used In Assassination Study

► **TESTS WERE RUN** on dummy skulls and necks resembling the wounded portions of President John F. Kennedy's body, the Warren Commission reported.

The main question behind this phase of the investigation was:

Could Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle, which shot the bullets found at the scene of the assassination, cause the wounds President Kennedy received?

To make the dummy heads, scientists at the Wound Ballistics Branch of the U.S. Army Chemical Research and Development Laboratories, Edgewood Arsenal, Md., filled empty skulls with a gelatin substance, coated the outside of the skull with this gelatin and then attached fake hair.

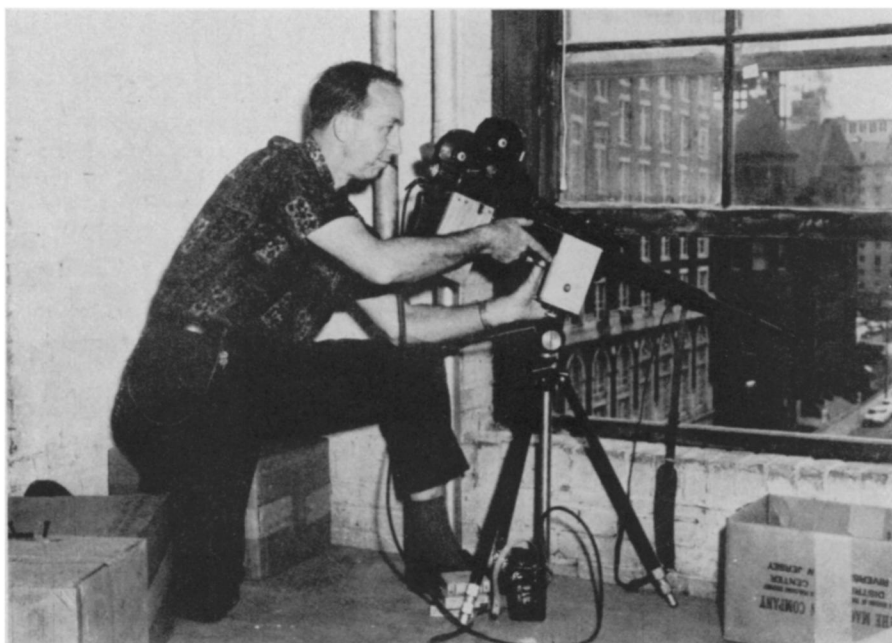
They then shot at the imitation heads at the same distance believed used in the assassination. When one skull was hit in the same way President Kennedy was, researchers found that the wounds were very similar to those the President received in the head.

Also, two fragments from the bullet which struck the dummy skull closely resembled those found in the President's limousine.

To make the dummy necks, ballistics scientists put together three blocks: one filled with the gelatin substance, and the other two made from different animal meats. Both sides of the blocks were covered with material, including clipped animal skin, to duplicate human skin.

From these tests, the commission concluded that the bullet fired by the assassin lost little velocity going through President Kennedy's neck, and could have caused serious injury to anyone else hit with it.

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Warren Commission

COMMISSION EXHIBIT NO. 887—This photograph taken during reenactment shows C2766 rifle with camera attached.