

Retyped script of Mrs. John Nichols which she presented after John Nichols' death.

President Kennedy's Head Wound

It is with feelings of sadness, inadequacy and pride that I read this paper which was to have been presented by my late husband, Dr. John Nichols who died on November 29th, the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Warren Commission by Executive Order #11130. This study, conducted during the past year with Dr. Floyd Foltz, Professor of Anatomy, was his last major "Kennedy Assassination" experiment.

Many have asked how John began his 15 year "pursuit of the truth". As John would say, "I was walking down the street about a month after the assassination when I suddenly realized that President Kennedy could not have been shot (referring to the neck wound from the 6th floor of the Book Depository Building." (Slide 1) Thus began his exhaustive investigations and scientific experiments. When he attempted to gain access to certain artifacts by filing suit in Federal Court, the Supreme Court denied *certiorari*. His last article was published in the October 1977 issue of the Maryland Medical Journal after being refused by 30 others.

When Zapruder film frames 313 and 314 are superimposed, they reveal President Kennedy's head and body moved violently backward and to the left after the fatal shot which came allegedly from the rear. This paradox challenged John, hence this study. More experiments had been planned for late October to provide data necessary for calculating the energy absorbed by the targets and retained by emerging bullets. Illness intervened and these studies were not done. It is hoped that support can be found to complete the studies as originally planned.

The paradox of the observed backward head and body motion is difficult to resolve scientifically. Several attempts have been made. The Army partially reenacted the assassination by shooting human skulls filled with gelatin, recording the results with an ultrahigh speed camera. Dr. Luis Alvarez shot wrapped melons at 30 meters using a 30.06 rifle, and soft nosed expanding hunting type bullets with 3000 ft/sec. velocity. The melons fell backward off the stand. This filmed movement was ascribed to a "jet effect". Dr. John Lattimer also recorded this "jet effect" when wrapped melons and skulls filled with melon contents were shot using a Mannlicher – Carcano rifle and authentic ammunition.

Our study used a ballistic pendulum, melons and cadaver material. The slide (2) shows the set-up. The gun – Mannlicher-Carcano rifle – was positioned to the left of the background grid, 25 feet from gun muzzle to target. The camera (slide) was a Government surplus Wollensak 16mm missile camera with film speed 280 to 300 frames per second. The ammunition was authentic 6.5mm jacketed bullets from lot # 6003.

Since cadaver specimens averaged nine pounds, all targets weighed approximately nine pounds. Melon targets, wrapped or unwrapped, were either suspended by wire and sling or positioned on a stand. All cadaver specimens were sling suspended. The decision was to shoot each target in the approximate assumed location of the fatal head shot, but the Autopsy Prosecutor and the Expert Review Panel disagree. (3) We had the choice of "slightly above and 2.5 cm. to the right of" or (4) "100mm.

above and to the right of" the external occipital protuberance. We chose slightly to the right of where the external protuberance would be if the melon or pendulum were a head.

From the pendulum movement, bullet velocity was calculated to be 200 ft./sec. with 1300 ft. lbs. of energy. So the destructive potential in this experiment was essentially the same.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study did not demonstrate the jet effect and would lead us to reject the jet effect as the basis for President Kennedy's backward head movement. Whether the movement was due to a massive neuro-muscular response, as postulated by some, remains to be demonstrated in a controlled situation.

Cine: (Slide 5 of conclusions)

CONCLUSIONS:

1. All target movement was in the direction of bullet flight path.
2. No evidence of backward movement due to jet effect.
3. All sling suspended targets moved forward.
4. All sling suspended targets showed more forward movement (2-4 inches) than targets on stand (0-2 inches).
5. When sling suspended targets exploded, they moved and fell forward out of sling.
6. On stand unwrapped melons:
 - a. Did not move
 - b. All had bullet entry and exit spray
 - c. One exploded and fell
 - d. Two exhibited explosive pulsations or oscillations.
7. On stand wrapped melons:
 - a. Two bounced and one then rolled forward
 - b. Three rolled forward about 1 inch.
8. Movement of all cadaver specimens was away from gun.
9. In two cadaver specimens measurable explosive oscillations were noted for 28 msec. before forward motion