

JFK's Murder: A "Coup d'état in America"

Analysis of Dr. Cyril Wecht

By [WhoWhatWhy](#) and [Cyril H. Wecht](#)

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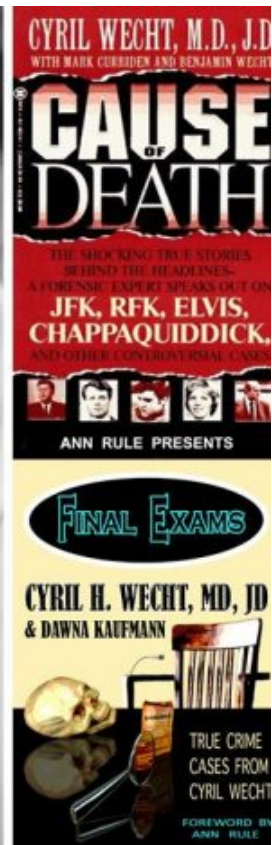
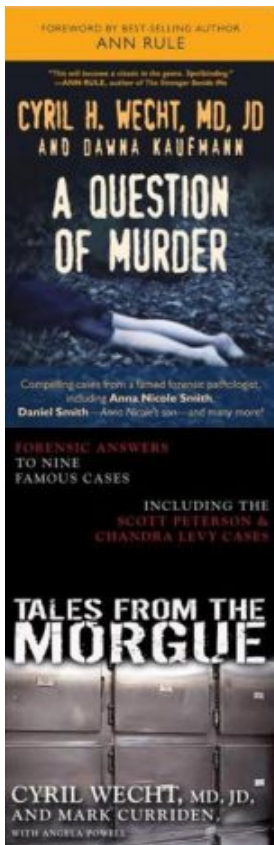
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Region: [USA](#)

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On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was gunned down in the streets of Dallas in broad daylight. According to the Warren Commission (1964), the government's first official investigative panel into the president's death, JFK was shot by lone gunman Lee Harvey Oswald from the 6th floor window of the Texas School Book Depository Building with an Italian Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. The Commission concluded that Oswald fired three shots: one that missed (the Commission said it was [inconclusive](#) which of the shots missed), one that hit both Kennedy and Governor John Connally (the "magic bullet"), and the final shot that hit Kennedy in the head.

The "magic bullet" is so named because it followed what seems to be an extraordinary trajectory: it penetrated JFK's back, exited the throat, then proceeded to hit Connally (who was sitting in front of Kennedy), passing through his back, hitting a rib, exiting his chest, hitting his right wrist, and finally hitting his left thigh, leaving behind a small fragment seven millimeters beneath the skin. What was presumably this same bullet was later found on a stretcher in nearly undamaged condition.



Cyril H. Wecht, author. Photo credit: Adapted by WhoWhatWhy from [WhoWhatWhy Org / YouTube](#).

Prometheus Books, Penguin and Planet Ann Rule.

The later House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) contradicted the Warren Commission by concluding that JFK's death was probably the result of a conspiracy involving two shooters. Today, however, most newsmedia and government figures publicly accept the findings of the Warren Commission, even though polling consistently shows that the vast majority of Americans have serious doubts about its conclusions.

Dr. Cyril Wecht, for two decades the elected coroner of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (including Pittsburgh), is a [nationally acclaimed forensic pathologist](#), and holds both a medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh (1956), and a law degree from the University of Maryland (1962). Forensic pathologists specialize in medically determining how and why someone died. In criminal murder cases this function is absolutely vital in helping to determine the guilt or innocence of a suspect — in no case more so than in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Dr. Wecht, a very early critic of the Warren Commission, [testified at the HSCA](#). At the annual [JFK Lancer assassination research conference](#) in Dallas, held in November, Dr. Wecht summarized the medical evidence against the lone-gunman hypothesis.

At the center of Dr. Wecht's examination is what has become known as the "single-bullet theory" — or the "magic bullet," as it is known to its detractors: the theory that one bullet can account for the multiple wounds (besides the headshot) of both JFK and Governor Connally. According to Dr. Wecht, the conclusions of the Warren Commission rest entirely on the single-bullet theory. If that theory fails, then there had to be more than one gunman. This, in turn, leads to questions about the history of the United States since 1963 that many people would rather not pursue.

With both passion and meticulous attention to detail, Wecht dissects the Warren Commission's conclusions. Moving beyond the medical evidence, he then utters words unexpected from any former American elected official, and particularly powerful coming from a person with his credentials: "What we witnessed...my friends, in plain, plain English — was [a] coup d'état in America. The overthrow of the government. That's what this case was all about."

At a time when America again faces extraordinary political turbulence, what happened more than half a century ago takes on renewed significance.

As a service to our readers, we provide transcripts with our podcasts. We try to ensure that these transcripts do not include errors. However, due to a constraint of resources, we are not always able to proofread them as closely as we would like and hope that you will excuse any errors that slipped through.

Full Text Transcript:

Under the single bullet theory, approximately a second to a second and a half, has elapsed, and Governor Connally under the definition of the single bullet theory, has been hit through the chest, through the wrist, the bone has been shattered, the radial nerve that permits the thumb to hold things in apposition has been almost completely severed. The bullet's gone

into the left thigh, and there he sits, continuing to hold the hat and to look forward. A remarkable accomplishment, one of the most incomplete, superficial, inadequate, inept, forensic pathologically incompetent medical legal autopsies I've ever seen.

Debra Conway: I want to honor you, Cyril. We all want to honor you. And It is a privilege to have you here. Thank you for coming so much in joining us. I tell you what. You want to get high? Go on YouTube and find Cyril Wecht talking about the single bullet theory. It is a high. I will Google him and show people, and we have a clip of him actually demonstrating that, at a trial. And I wish it would work, but anyway. My husband is probably Cyril's biggest fan though they only met tonight, but he's watched *Concussion* probably 758 times, and every time he'll tell people, "My wife knows him." But you know when you talk about bravery, this is a cliché, but you know what, you look in the dictionary and you're going to see this man right here. And not just about the Kennedy assassination. He's fought for life for people. He's explained death for juries.

He's shown us, more than anybody else that I can think of, that there is a truth in death, that there is a truth in how you die. That's pretty comforting that your body is evidence in a way that we never understood before. Now it's in every movie. Crime scene evidence. My own sister is a crime scene expert. But guess who was the pioneer? Our pioneer. And you know, he could have run screaming from the Kennedy assassination. He didn't need this, but I think he recognized kindred spirits, and this is what I'm telling you, is that you have power as a community, as a group, you have power. And this guy is the accelerator. You push on that accelerator and your power is exposed. He is an accelerator for us. Cyril, I just can't even tell you. I wish Mary was here. This award is in her name. I appreciate you honoring her by accepting the award and I absolutely don't even know what else to say. So let's just let him have the microphone.

Cyril Wecht: It's a pleasure to be here and I am humbled by this award. I want to thank Debra Conway for the magnificent job that she has done in organizing this group that she designated as Lancer, bringing people together in these annual conferences with ongoing programs in between, to holding people together and to constantly keeping our minds and eyes and attention on the distant horizon and to helping us to keep our faith that one day we shall bring this matter to full disclosure and ultimate veracity and fruition. Debra has done a fantastic job and I thank her very much and for her gracious invitation to be here with you folks, and of course for this wonderful award which I did not know about.

Somehow Debra, it makes it more wonderful. I got a note from Debra's co-editor. Debra, I'll talk about this in a moment briefly, Debra's co-editor of our CAPA newsletter with Bill Kelly, and Bill wrote me some stuff just about our next newsletter, having nothing to do with the conferences here but, and he said something about an award. And I was going through the material he sent me, making some changes and corrections and so on, and I wrote in parentheses, "Are you sure about this?" And then I heard more earlier today from my colleagues in CAPA. Well anyway, however it happened, it made it that much more magnificent. I just want to briefly say that this new organization, Citizens Against Political Assassinations, CAPA, the acronym of course, has been founded I think in this year toward the end of last year, and we are looking for people to join.

This is not in competition with any existing organization; rather we are looking to existing organizations such as Lancer and all the other groups that are dedicated and to achieving this ultimate goal for which we have fought so valiantly over the decades. But it is an organization which will be focusing on the political assassinations, but for right now JFK. In

1992, the United States Congress passed the JFK Records Act calling for the release of all the sequestered JFK materials in the tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of pages. I don't think anybody really knows what is all there, for those to be released in 25 years. That will be October 2017. We are focused on that. So we need your input. We have the membership forms out there and we invite you to join to become active members, and to tell us what committee you might like to be on, and give us your expertise, your knowledge, your courage, your strength, and your hard work, your productivity.

As I said, Debra has been working very hard on this, and we're delighted that she is now the co-editor of our newsletter. I'm sorry that we somehow got messed up on not bringing the first newsletter but we can make those available directly or through Debra. That's not a big problem, but we'll be in touch on that. But do keep that in mind, CAPA. And I want to stress the fact this is not in any way a competing organization. It is all of us together, focused specifically on right now the release of those records. We're going to deal with Robert Kennedy. We're going to deal with Martin Luther King. We're going to deal with other matters, but this is our primary attention.

So let's talk about JFK. I do have it, okay. I wanted to give you a chance to see all those other books too. By the way, and I'm not here to hustle books, but if any of you, I did want to remind anyone interested in the JonBenet Ramsey case, I published, I published... I wrote that book that was published with Charles Bosworth, who's now become a good friend, he's an excellent professional writer and a very professional person in his own field of... He was a former newspaper reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and now with a major industrial company handling the PR. So Charlie and I wrote that book in 1998, *Who Killed JonBenet Ramsey*. And I was delighted earlier this year -- so what is that, 1998? 18 years later -- to see this plethora of TV programs. I think there were four hours on CBS. Dr. Phil had a couple of our programs and so on. So anyone who's interested, the book is being republished. It's already out in e-form. We're told it's Amazon Kindle number two. It's in audio form and in one week it will be in printed form. *Who Killed JonBenet Ramsey*. So anyone who's interested in that, and while this is not a political conspiracy, it does involve political shenanigans. And not at the level of what we are addressing, but it shows you how politics get involved in this kind of case. In Elvis Presley, and Chandra Levy, and so many others. It's fascinating just to think about that.

When I talk generally about all my cases touching upon all of them, I didn't set out this way and I came to realize after a while that there was in most, not necessarily all, but in most a political common denominator. Ron Brown, Secretary of Commerce. Vincent Foster, White House legal counsel. And then these other cases too, and how they get manipulated by the politicians, by some governmental agency. Again, I'm not equating this with what we are dealing with here tonight, but I want to, the thought just came to me right now.

I don't even know if I've mentioned this before, but the point I wish to make is, you know we're very smug. We're very chauvinistic. We're very arrogant as Americans. It's one thing to be proud of who we are. It's another thing not to recognize that we have in our government, and it's not Republican, Democrat, Liberal, Conservative. We have in our government many of the same things that go on in other countries of the world. They're not as blatant. They're not as vile and vicious. They're not as obvious. They're not picking people up off the street and throwing them in the concentration camps, or just killing them and so on. But in terms of what the government can do, in terms of the manipulation, in terms of the lies, the deceit, the cover-ups, they're there and they're not necessarily limited to major political assassinations at the national level. Just something to keep in mind.

My wife and I just came back from China. I've been to China three times before. My very dear friend and personal professional colleague, Dr. Henry C. Lee, he was honored by the Dr. Henry C. Lee Museum of Forensic Science, the first forensic science museum in the world. It's established in Rugao, China, a city, small Chinese city, just about a million or so, about three hours north of Shanghai, and that's where Henry was born and raised in the first few years. And I was invited to be one of the speakers there and I was highly honored and we had a magnificent time with top level officials there. And seeing the Chinese government and the people in the way they work, and the changes that have occurred since 1980, and had the opportunity to be in Russia, many other countries and so on, I can't help but think that we have to be very much aware of what's going on.

And nowhere is this more important; nowhere is it more identifiable than in the JFK assassination.

Our president gunned down right here in the streets of this great American city in broad daylight. And to this day, 53 years later, the government is still covering up. Yes, Gary correctly identified our opponents. Ah, nothing to be worried about, just *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and all the other major news media. Just the federal government across the board. And then of course all of the, what did you call them, Gary? Debunkers? Was that your word? Um, a formidable array indeed.

Just give you a recent example. David Talbot, one of us, a major scholar, author, esteemed respected individual, wrote a magnificent book, if you haven't read it, *The Devil's Chessboard*, David Talbot. And *The New York Times*, when his publisher, when his agent called in to *The New York Times*, they told him boldly, blatantly, unabashedly, "We are not going to review this book! It's that goddamn simple!" I stopped writing letters to the editor when they'll have some article on JFK. There'll be no coverage. There've been great conferences here over the years. We've had two major conferences in Pittsburgh, the Cyril Wecht Institute of Forensics and Law at Duquesne University, 2003 and 2013. No coverage at all whatsoever from *The New York Times*. This indeed is a formidable enemy, but Gary made one error, or a reference which is not quite correct in talking about wrong and right, black and white, and up and down and the other metaphors that he used. He referred to the majority. My friends, we are the majority! We are the majority. Not because I say this to make myself feel good and to seek obsequiously your solicitation and support, and applause, but I want you to know the hard facts. And you do know them. But remind yourselves of that and don't hesitate the next time somebody comes up, the debunker or whatever the hell he is, the Warren Commission sycophant defender, self-appointed person, and gives you that business, "Oh you're one of those conspiratorialists." Screw you, buddy! 65 to 85% of the American public in one poll after another does not accept the Warren Commission report. Who is the majority?

I ask you this. You name me, think about this, and when you go home and you go the rest of the weekend doing whatever, you think of what other major concept, endeavor, entity, philosophical, political, governmental, you think of something out there which has had the support of 2/3 to 3/4 of the American public on a continuous basis, now, for four into five decades, which has not been ultimately accepted, which has not been moved into the place of primacy in whatever that particular field may be, whatever the particular subject may be. It is only this. It is only this, JFK, which they dare not touch. They are in a very difficult position, extremely difficult. And we are in an even more difficult position. Not precarious, not dangerous, but difficult because of the formidable odds we face.

So let's just talk about the JFK assassination and refresh ourselves a little bit. You all know of course the background, and JFK coming to Dallas in 1963, political barnstorming. He was asked, he was advised, he was warned, he was urged not to go. Adlai Stevenson, twice Democratic nominee for the presidency of the United States of America, a magnificent individual, whether you voted or liked him or not, but I mean highly respected in every way, our UN ambassador, he was physically spat upon and jostled in the streets of this city, just a couple of weeks or so before Kennedy came. Kennedy's people were fearful. I don't think that they were thinking about assassination. I have no reason to suggest that. But they didn't want an ugly scene.

Well, as it turned out, it was going to be a beautiful setting and scene. As the plane landed coming over from Fort Worth to Love Field, and the motorcade lined up and they moved into the city toward Dealey Plaza, the sun began to shine. The flags were flying. The crowds were cheering. The sun was shining. It was beautiful. And the last words that were ever directly and personally spoken to President Kennedy, Nellie Connally, sitting in front of Jackie Kennedy with her husband to her right, and Jackie Kennedy behind her, and the president behind the governor. Nellie Connally turned, as I'm turning now and said, "Mr. President, you can't say that the people of Texas don't love you." Those were the last words that were spoken to John Kennedy. At 12:30 your time, as the cars then turned from Houston onto Elm, shots rang out, the president is hit, then Connally is hit, then Kennedy is hit again.

So here you have the layout. You know all that by memory. You've traversed it I'm sure many times in the past as I did again today with my colleague, Andrew Kreig, and walked around there in the parking area, and the picket fence, and the whole scene, and the huge crowds. I did an hour and a half interview, by the way, with the museum, and it's now in the archives. The new archivist, new curator, Steve Fagan, whom I met for the first time, he invited me. Very nice gentleman, and it was a pleasure to meet him and to have this done, and to see him in place of the person who preceded him, who had once been one of us and who turned out to be a Benedict Arnold, the traitor, to put it mildly. So anybody has time, you can go there and watch it.

So, we see that, and you know the whole pergola, the whole layout. Okay, another shot, the 6th floor southeast corner window. Another close-up of that. And then here is some pieces from the Zapruder film. Watch it, watch it, watch it carefully. Just keep your eyes focused as the cars go behind and then come out from behind the Stemmons Freeway sign.

Here it is in slow motion. I want you to pay special attention to the relationship, physically of the president and the governor. Is that coming through? Look. And then I want you to see, the president was hit, moving violently backward and to the left.

There is a shot showing you how they sat and how they looked. And make note nothing different. You've seen political parades. I have, since I was a little boy in Pittsburgh. And Veterans Day, they used to have, they still do have, parades. Used to be called Armistice Day. And other major parades. And the local politicians. And just as here, the national politicians, you're looking and waving at the crowd. Keep that in mind and I'll touch upon that later. Okay, now here you see some shots and they come out from behind the Stemmons Freeway sign. And what I want to show you here is as we get closer and closer, I want you to see and pay special attention please, look at this shot. Notice...

Do I have a pointer here? Top button? Very good.

Notice the position of John Connally's white Stetson hat. Please notice that, and look at his face. One more? No. Okay, look at his face. At this point in time under the single bullet theory, which Mark Lane and I and many others dubbed a long time ago, the magic bullet theory, this man has been shot through the chest, the lung has been pierced, 4 inches of the right fifth rib have been destroyed, the radius just above wrist level has been shattered, a comminuted fracture. Not a linear nondisplaced fracture. Comminuted, which means fragmented fracture. Bullet has reentered into his left thigh. Pretty tough guy. Pretty goddamn tough Texan, okay. I'm sorry I didn't vote for him for president. Well, I couldn't. I'm a Democrat and he was running in the Republican primary. But you keep that in mind.

Audience: Delayed reaction, sir.

Cyril: Delayed reaction... All right. Here, I want you to see this now. Here, now watch. We're going into frame three, there's a crimson burst, literally the explosion of the president's head. And I want you to watch in the subsequent frames the movement of the president's body. Backward, leftward, backward, leftward, backward. So much so that the motorcycle officer riding behind the president's left rear wheel was certain for several seconds that he had been shot. He was covered with blood and brain tissue and other pieces of calvarium parts of the skull that struck him, all hitting in that direction.

Now what you're looking at is the official diagram of the president, made by the pathologist at Bethesda. But let's step back before we get to Bethesda. The cars are sped quickly to Parkland Hospital, the major trauma center. Some 18 physicians came there in a matter of minutes, many already assembled. Others drifting in as quickly as possible. And you should know this then, that 18 physicians included among whom was the chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery, Kemp Clark, a renowned neurosurgeon. How many brains he had operated on? In the thousands, undoubtedly. When the surgeons said to him, "Dr. Clark." They probably called him Kemp. "Please assess this man." His words, immortalized, were, "There is nothing that can be done to save this man." And what did Clark see? And what did the other physicians see? Trauma surgeons who had seen people with head injuries, who were medical people, who had studied the brain.

But let's talk about Clark and focus on him as a neurosurgeon and at that time, and his chief resident, Robert Grossman, who went on to become chief at Baylor, where my son, my second oldest son, trained for six years as a neurosurgeon some years ago. What did these two men see and say, and the others also? Every one of them! The rear part of the calvarium, the top part of your skull, the bony part called calvarium, the rear part of the occipital area, this is frontal forehead, temporal around the ears, occipital in the back and parietal on the top in between the others, okay. They talked about and described fractures of the occipital part of the calvarium. They talked about destructive damage blowing out of the cerebellum. The cerebellum, that part of the brain separate from the two cerebral hemispheres located posteriorly and inferiorly, as back and down at the bottom of your brain handling coordination and balance normally for us, they all described that, okay. Those are the descriptions made by those doctors.

Now at that point in time nobody knew Oswald, nobody knew Russia, nobody knew a goddamn thing. They were just doctors dealing with an injured person. Yes, he was the president, but nobody had any reason to do anything other than note that which was present. That's all. Their innocence, they are people untarnished, uninfluenced at that point in time. What did they see? In Parkland here in Dallas, they saw a wound in front of the neck, and they saw then a big defect on the skull as I have described to you. There then

ensued a very ugly situation. The local medical examiner, Dr. Earl Rose, who was a contemporary of mine, I had met Dr. Rose when I was in the Air Force and he was stationed elsewhere. And we were at the Armed Forces Institute for Forensic Pathology seminar. They used to have these seminars, symposiums, and I met Dr. Rose, and he was there to assume jurisdiction which is exactly what was supposed to have been done. Earl Rose was slammed up against the wall by the Feds, hands on guns, profanity threatened, and they took the body of the president illegally out of the city in violation of the laws of the city and county, and those of the state of Texas.

Well, here is the retrospective irony. That illegal act, as vile as it was, should have been used to the benefit of the government and all of us. Why? It gave them seven hours to put into place the number one team of forensic pathologists to do this autopsy, and all the time there's no rush, there's no hurry. Dr. Milton Helpert, the chief medical examiner of New York City, who was the dean of forensic pathologists in America at that time, he was packing his bag. I know this from Milton, we talked about this. He was packing his bag, not because he was an arrogant, conceited man, but he knew, he was head honcho, and he called two or three other forensic pathologists and asked them if they would be available to go and assist him. Just was no question that he would be called in to do this autopsy. Our president, right? Not you, not me, not your neighbor. Our president, multiple gunshot wounds. You've got to determine angle, range, trajectory, sequence, and then you've got to correlate with the wounds in Governor Connally. This is, this is a real bitch. This is tough, baby, I want to tell you. When you get a multiple gunshot wound case and bullets are still inside the body, let alone trying to match it up with other things, animate and inanimate, this is a tough, tough conundrum.

Well, who did they call to do the autopsy at Bethesda that evening? Two career naval pathologists, Humes and Boswell. And you listen to this carefully because I want you to repeat this the next time you talk with somebody who tells you that the Warren Commission report is right. I want you to jam this down his throat and you let him know what he begins with was an evidentiary burden. What he is assuming, you let him know, that Humes and Boswell had never done a single gunshot wound autopsy in their entire careers. Not a single gunshot wound autopsy. I frequently like to toss out a hypothetical analogy, an analogous situation. Let us say that the president that day, when getting out of the shower, slipped and fell, and struck his head. And he obviously had a concussion. He was dazed and they had to determine whether or not there was anything there of a significant nature and so on. Under my hypothetical, hypothetical, how would you have felt as non-medical people if they had called in an obstetrician, a dermatologist, and a plastic surgeon to evaluate the president? Huh, okay?

I want to tell you something. I had four long good years of residency in pathology, two at the VA hospital in Pittsburgh under a top guy, two in the Air Force at the largest Air Force Base in the country. Four years. And when I finished four years, I didn't know a goddamn thing about forensic pathology. I had never seen a single traumatic case except one airplane crash over Gunter Air Force Base, on the other side of Montgomery, Alabama. But I knew nothing about it. I had never seen a motor-vehicular accident. I had never seen a suicide. I had never seen a homicide. You don't see these things when you are in pathology, in hospitals, you don't see these. Those cases go to coroners and medical examiners. These guys had never even seen a single gunshot wound autopsy in their entire careers. What did they see that night?

Am I just being professionally demeaning because I'm offended as a forensic pathologist?

Well, let's see what they did and you decide for yourselves. They claim to have seen and found a separate smaller hole in the back of the head, and then a large blowout on the right side. And they then took off the corselet garment that Kennedy wore because of his World War II back injury, and they found a bullet hole several inches down, about five inches, five and half inches below the mastoid process. And they probed that wound in the back with their finger, a man's index finger. Felt nothing. They took a metal probe, probed in, felt nothing, heard no metallic sound. Took x-rays, saw nothing. Did the autopsy, took out the lungs, looked in the thoracic cavity and found nothing. Now, I wasn't there. You weren't there. But just picture, picture you're doing an autopsy on the President of the United States of America, and we came to learn, documented, some 33 people were in and out of that autopsy room that night, including four-star admirals and generals, FBI, and Secret Service, and you are there doing an autopsy, and you got a bullet hole, and you can't find the goddamn bullet.

Well, as they were thinking about changing their underwear, some information came in from the FBI to the FBI here, from Dallas to DC, transmitted to them in Bethesda, that a maintenance man back in Parkland Hospital had to go to the bathroom. He had to urinate. Thank God, because as he was going by the ER and there were stretchers blocking the corridor, he bent down to move the stretcher and lo and behold there was a bullet. Whether it was on the stretcher and fell off, whether it was under the stretcher, you get different stories, but the point is there was this bullet, 6.5 mm copper jacketed lead core, 1 1/4 inch in length, 3/4 of an inch in diameter, and there lay this bullet that nobody had seen before.

I've often wondered. It's funny in a way if it weren't such a serious matter. And I don't know what would've happened if he didn't have to take a piss then. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know where. Well, I tell you, I do know. You can bet your ass that bullet was going to be found somewhere, that somebody... it was going to be found, okay. Well, that information given to the clowns at Bethesda that evening, while the body's there, they seized upon it like a drowning man would seize upon a raft and said, "Ah, we know the answer. When the president lay supine on his back and the doctors applied pressure to the front of his chest for cardiac massage, they forced the bullet back out through the same channel and it fell out from his back."

Well, it doesn't work that way. See, if you were in Pittsburgh, we have these three large tunnels, I always do this, I don't know of any tunnels down here. We have three large, long tunnels: Fort Pitt, Liberty and Squirrel Hill tunnels. I love to tell my audiences around there when I'm talking about JFK, which I did as recently as last night. I say, just picture yourself, folks, going into the Liberty tunnels and you decide when you're in there, that you're going in the wrong direction. So you put your car in reverse and you back out. Well, bullets don't work that way. When the bullet slams into you, it produces hemorrhage, it produces immediate swelling of the tissues, edema, it becomes encased, engorged and held in place by fibrous tissue, whatever the tissue may be. They don't move around and they sure as hell don't go in and come back out through an open channel. It doesn't work that way. But this is what they decided. This was a report that they turned in to the President and Hoover that night, Friday, November 22, 1963.

The next morning, they finally got around to speaking with the chief surgeon in Dallas and what did they learn? What did I tell you a few minutes ago? I know, it's late in the evening, you've been here all day, you're tired. How about the bullet hole in the front of the neck? Did I mention anything about that having been noted by the pathologists at Bethesda? Take a look at the person sitting next to you. Do you think that you would have to go four years of

college, pre-med, four years of medical school and six years of pathology to see that the guy or the woman sitting next to you has blood coming out of an open hole in the front of his neck? What do you think? What do you think? You think you want to spend fourteen years to learn how to recognize that? Well, how could they have missed it?

Because the doctors at Parkland, in looking at the bullet wound that they saw, noted immediately that it had ripped through the trachea. When you have brain injury from stroke or hemorrhage, whatever and trauma and the brain's not functioning, the brain is the boss. Ladies, forget Valentine's Day and the heart in February, that's sheer nonsense, okay. The brain is the boss. You got to take over the brain's function. You got to take out CO2, you got to put in oxygen, you got to suction out blood and mucus in order to try to work on the wounds. In this case, it wouldn't have made any difference, but that's what you got to try to do. And so the doctors at Dallas had quite appropriately and correctly expanded that because the hole was too small to attach the cuff from the respirator machine, so they enlarged upon it.

These guys that did the autopsy that night, as totally inexperienced as they were and having failed to talk with the surgeons, which you always do as a coroner medical examiner forensic pathologist. When you have somebody who's been shot or stabbed and been operated upon, you want to talk to the surgeons if at all possible, if time permits and they are available and they sure as hell would have been available and time permitted, in this case to ask them what they did. Because invariably, the surgeons will go through a gunshot wound or a stab wound. They want to get to the seat, to the etiology of the hemorrhage of the damage, of the trauma to the internal organs and tissues. And so you want to find out from them what they did, but they failed to do that. Now it's Saturday morning and they learned about this tracheostomy and they learned that they missed a bullet hole. How do you handle that? What do you do?

I'll tell you what you do. If you're Asian, you commit suicide. You do, you do, believe me, believe me, I know, I know. And if you're European, you resign and you go into seclusion. If you're American, you just bullshit your way out of it. That's the way. Everything's in place. Oswald has been conveniently dispatched by Jack Ruby and we're told in the Warren Commission by the way, that Jack Ruby just happened to be in the area sending some money to a former stripper of his through Western Union. Jack Ruby was this wonderful, gracious, generous human being. Of course it turns out he was Mafia from the age of 17, little Jacob Rubenstein in Chicago. Mafia.

Now, it is a matter of documented record. He was led into the basement by a high ranking police official. So, Oswald is gone and Monday, November 25, J. Edgar Hoover is already announcing to the world that the case is over. Lee Harvey Oswald is the sole assassin. He knows! I would be willing to wager you that the next time there is a murder in your community, wherever you are from, wherever city unless it's something that is done in the open and there's no question, people saw it but if there's any murder in which they have to look around and question people, and so on and so forth, I'll make a wager with any of you that you will not get a pronouncement from your local law enforcement agency whether you're from East Podunkville or West Overshoe, I don't care where you're from. You will not get a public statement from them in 48 hours... in 72 hours saying that the case is over.

But J. Edgar Hoover, he already knew by Monday that nobody else was involved but Oswald. How the hell can you know that? You got a man that you have quickly ascertained, has spent two and a half years in Russia, has married the niece of a KGB colonel and that

background and everything, but you know that nobody else was involved? No matter what we believe today, no matter what we know, no matter even the people who believe in the Warren Commission report, is there anybody here, anybody that you know who would be willing to say "Hey man, there's no question that they were able to arrive at that conclusion by Monday"? How in the world? Goes to show you, my friends, what was involved here. How the game was being played and keep these things in mind.

Okay, so this is the sketch of the President; their official drawing at Bethesda. There's the famous death stare. That's just showing a fragment, I want to move on. This is the diagram of Connally. Now, look please, look. There is the original entrance, right posterior axillary, which means in simple terms, behind the right armpit. Here is the exit wound, here is the re-entrance wound in the wrist, here is the re-exit wound on the front of the wrist and here's the final resting place in the thigh.

So, what is the single bullet theory given to us by Arlen Specter, then junior legal counsel, later to become senior US Senator in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania? I don't say this to dump posthumously on Specter, as a matter of fact, we became quite good friends. I even came out for him in 2004, he asked me if I would support him. He, a Republican, I had been very active in Democratic politics and I did come out for Arlen Specter in 2004 and had a big press conference and I helped him undoubtedly, I think, in his reelection. I did the same thing in 2010, but he lost in the Democratic primary, he had switched parties, so I'm not doing this to dump on Specter, but Specter was the creator of the single bullet theory.

Here's the setting. They have gotten the murder weapon, a Mannlicher-Carcano, considered by every long gun expert I've ever spoken to as the most inferior weapon of its genre developed anywhere in the world. In 1971 or '72, we had done a medical legal program I put together with the Institute of Legal Medicine in Rome in '65 and we got along so very well, they invited me to come back and do it again, I think in '72. They asked me at that time then to speak on the Kennedy assassination because by that time, I had spoken out quite a bit on it. I spoke to this distinguished group, they were all older than I, distinguished professors whom I had met before, these wonderful gentlemen and ladies and when I spoke about the single bullet theory and I spoke about the Mannlicher-Carcano, I saw some of them giggling and looking at each other and so on, I felt so bad. I felt my God, what the hell did you say?

So when it was over, I went to the new director Silvio Merli and I said, "Silvio..." - he spoke good English - I said, "I felt so bad, did I say something that was wrong or insulting in any way?" He says, "No, no you don't understand. The Mannlicher-Carcano, which had been developed in Italy going into World War II, the Mannlicher-Carcano is considered," said he, "as an instrument of love, not a weapon of war." They got the best marksman they could find to see how long it took to shoot this weapon. You shoot, you unload, you reload without allowing for re-aiming and repositioning, without allowing for accuracy, shooting from a platform built in an open field. How long did it take, the best marksman they could find to shoot? 2.3 seconds, okay. Fine, that's what it is.

But along came something known as the Zapruder film. Abraham Zapruder, a woman's clothing merchant here in Dallas, he bought a brand new 8mm Bell & Howell camera and he went that day to Dealey Plaza and he stood on the parapet coming down from the pergola, his secretary braced this elderly gentleman's leg and he started his camera rolling as the cars turned from Houston to come down Elm Street. And that Zapruder film, you all know of course how valuable it is as a piece of evidence, invaluable as it was to the Zapruder family.

The FBI and the Bell Howell people examined that film and they all agreed that 18.3 frames move through the camera per second. Now, most of you are old enough but there are some younger people here that don't know about the old-fashioned films. But those of us who are over 50 remember in high school, you took the film and you threaded it on the metal things, so each one of those things is called a frame, and then turns into a picture. In fact, when you go to an amusement park, I know you must have it here as we do in Pittsburgh and you want to see the old-fashioned films back in the 1910s and early '20s, Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, who knows what, and you put in your coin or whatever it is and you begin to turn the crank, you're looking at picture after picture. When you go real fast, you begin to make a movie and that's of course, how movies are made - the frames.

And they blew these up into large pictures and now knowing that 18.3 frames per second, and you're studying the assassination of the president. The murder of a human being killed by multiple gunshot wounds and the wounding of another person and you are moving as I did a year and a half later at *Life Magazine* headquarters with Dr. Josiah "Tink" Thompson, who invited me to come with him to *Life Magazine* headquarters; that they had purchased the Zapruder film from Abraham Zapruder and there I was doing it as they had done a year and half earlier in a room almost the size of this room, in large x-ray view boxes turned up this way and you go from frame to frame, picture to picture and you move 1/18th of a second from frame to frame.

There's not a word you can utter, there's not a thought you can entertain, there's not a movement you can make 18 times in one second, but you can study the assassination of John F. Kennedy at 1/18th second intervals. Now, when they did that, they had one hell of a problem because it's clear that John Connally was struck 1.5 seconds after Kennedy was hit the first time and there's no disagreement on that. 1.5 seconds, how could that be? How could that be? If it takes the best marksman they could find and Oswald was not known to be such an outstanding marksman by any means, having flunked his test the first time in the US Marines, barely passing score the second time around, his colleagues and friends with whom he hunted a little bit in Russia and elsewhere said that he was nothing at all when it came to shooting, how could he have done it in 1.5 seconds? And that is what gave birth to the single bullet theory.

There, close your eyes, picture yourself at the table, none of us was there. How do you deal with this seemingly impossible, not only formidable, but seemingly impossible physical incongruity between the timing of the shooting of the Mannlicher-Carcano and the Zapruder film? How do you put them together? And that's when Arlen Specter said: "Aha, what if one bullet caused all of these wounds? Not the head wounds, forget about the head wounds. What if one bullet went into Kennedy, came out of Kennedy, went into Connally's chest, out his chest, into Connally's wrist, out his wrist and into his left thigh?" And that is the single bullet theory, okay.

Here, I'm going to do this. Larry, bring your chair up here. No, we'll do it right here. Sir, bring your chair over here and sit in front of Mr. Schnapf. Larry Schnapf, by the way, is one of the board of the directors of our CAPA organization, okay. Mr. President and Mr. Governor, two and a half feet, thirty inches between chest and back, here is the single bullet theory. Fired from up there, see that sixth floor, there it is, look at that, up there towards the exit sign. It's coming from back to front, it's going from right to left and it's going from up downward. It comes in, hits Kennedy down here, down below the shoulder about five inches and exits from the front of his neck; it's an eleven-and-a-half-degree upward angle!

You know how my colleagues in the Forensic Pathology Panel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations handled that? They said, well what if Kennedy were bent over like this? I said yeah, you know what, look at the Zapruder film and you will not find the President tying his shoelace or scratching his groin. That's not what he was doing! So you got an upward angle of eleven and a half degrees to begin with - no, turn around Mr. Governor - the bullet continues to come downward, forward and leftward. If it had cut Connally over here, maybe we wouldn't be talking that well, you know... The bullet comes in mid-air, turns about 18 inches and slams into him over here in the right posterior axillary area. Then, it proceeds through his chest, perforates the lung, destroys four inches of the right fifth rib, exits below the nipple level - you saw the diagram.

The Governor, this is your wife's destiny, governor. This is where the Stetson hat is in the Zapruder film. Don't do what I tell you. You got eyes. Go and study it yourself! This is where the Stetson hat was. The bullet comes out below nipple level, it comes back up and around and hits him behind the back of the wrist, produces a comminuted fracture of the radius, which by the way is a broad bone. The radius broadens just before it meets the small eight bones of the wrist - it broadens. You're talking about a six foot four, big boned Texan, John Connally. It produces a comminuted fracture, exits from the front of the wrist, goes down into the left thigh. You like that? That's the single bullet theory. Thank you, Governor, thank you.

So you see why Mark Lane and I and others call it the magic bullet, because it readily and happily obliges you anything you want. On Friday night of the autopsy, the bullet is from Kennedy's back. On Saturday morning of November 23, the bullet is from Kennedy's neck. It saw the starched white color, got frightened to death and just plopped down into his shirt. And then five months later with the Warren Commission, under the single bullet theory, the bullet is now from Connally's left thigh. You're with me? That's 399, that's the magic bullet.

Understand this my friends; **the single bullet theory** is a *sine qua non* of the Warren Commission's Report conclusion vis-à-vis the sole assassin. Without the single bullet theory, you've got two people shooting. You cannot have one shooter. Not that all the other things that many of you here today and the other conferences that have taken place over the years and all the people who've done splendid work in investigating every aspect of this case from beginning to end, they are to be praised. I do not denigrate or diminish their work at all. But what I'm saying is you don't reach that point. Who is Oswald, CIA? You don't reach that! If you don't have the single bullet theory, you got two shooters! You got two shooters, you got a conspiracy! Under the laws of every state and the federal government, two of us planning together. I may be the one rapes the girl, but you knew about it and you drove me there and waited for me. You and I, maybe I went in and robbed the bank and you just waited for me. You are a conspirator. When you got conspirators, then you got to open up that door. And once you open up door one, baby, what does it lead to? How many other doors does it open? That is the government's problem! Do you understand that?

I was asked when I spoke last night in a community outside Pittsburgh by some intelligent people, why can't they say that there was another shooter? You can't. You're pregnant or you're not pregnant. You got a single bullet theory, and then you can go on. Oh, we can blow up the Warren Commission Report as far as I'm concerned in many other ways but what I'm saying to you is that you don't even get there unless you have a single bullet theory.

This is a bullet being held up. This is an actual fragment of the bullet. This bullet, in store

bought condition weighted 161 grains as it was found to weigh 158.6 grains. A loss of 2.4 grains, mathematically believe me, it is exactly 1.5%. So what we're told is that the fragments that Connally took to the grave with him, we tried to get those to Attorney General Janet Reno who did try, contacted FBI, not only Connally refused. I spoke with the chief OR nurse, Audrey Bell many years ago. I called her up and she was very nice and gracious and I forget exactly how I got to the questions and she told me that there were several fragments of metal given to her by the surgeons who operated on John Connally, which she turned over to the FBI. So those fragments, and the fragments that he took to the grave in three anatomical locations, we're told that all of them collectively weighed only 1.5% of the bullet. No way in the world! And then we were told that one of the fragments matched the single bullet 399 to the exclusion of all of the bullets. That has been totally, totally repudiated in this marvelous paper by Dr. Randlich [*Editor: J. Forensic Sci. Vol.51 No.4*] and others, won't dwell on that, just take my word for it. This is the trajectory, up and down, okay? Here it is.

[Trying to show something here, slides, but doesn't work]

Alright, here is the bullet. The bullet, completely pristine. The only deformity: at the base of the bullet from the impact of the firing mechanism. Look at the cone, the nose of the bullet after having struck two large bones, completely intact. This slight indentation is where the FBI took a piece of metal, properly for spectrographic analysis. Completely intact! And I've talked to you about the weight of the bullet. Now there was somebody on the Warren Commission, I don't know who, who said "Hey, let's do a scientific experiment. Isn't that what you're supposed to do? Let's see what would happen", and they got three sets of targets. The first set were cotton wadding. You shoot the bullet in the cotton wadding striking nothing, so there's nothing to impact and deform the bullet. What will the bullet look like just having been fired from the gun? Then they got goat carcasses and they lined them up to break a rib of a goat to simulate Connally's rib fracture. And then they got human cadavers and lined them up to shoot through the radius to simulate Connally's radial fracture.

This is their experiment. If God or whoever is in charge of the universe said to me, you got to give up everything you own Wecht on the Kennedy assassination, I mean every everything; I mean every letter, I mean every memo, I don't care. Every article, every book, everything in the world, no matter where it came from, when you got it, everything! I'm going to allow you to keep one thing and one thing only, not a set of things, but one thing. This is what I keep. And it's not mine! I didn't create it, I had nothing to with it. This is the government's! And so, as I like to say to audiences: ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I am the prosecutor. You've been sitting here patiently for six, seven weeks listening to this case. I don't want to keep you any longer than necessary.

His Honor will give you instructions, but I do want to just recapitulate some of the highlights. I've sat here, as my learned colleague defending the defendant, that guy Oswald over there, and my learned colleague has in deprecating, denigrating fashion made comments about, what he smugly referred to as the magic bullet theory, which we have presented to you of course, and which is very critical to our case. And so I just want to refresh your memories and your minds because you've been here so long and let me show you this vital piece of evidence which we the government produced!

And look! If a bullet that goes through cotton - what the hell is going on here? Goddamn government will stop at nothing - alright, I'm not going to use the pointer. If a bullet that

goes in the cotton wadding can look like this; look at the base, little deformity, right? And a bullet that breaks a rib can look like this, almost looks like a different caliber, it's the same...deformity, and a bullet that breaks a radius can look like this, is there anybody amongst you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, does anybody have a doubt for one moment? Is there any basis for any hesitation whatsoever that if a bullet that breaks both a rib and a rib can look like this? This is 399, this is the bullet, this is the government's slide, this is what they got to live with, they go to trial. This is 399! This your goddamn evidence, you did the experiments! This is your rib fracture; this is your radius fracture! You're telling us that the two of them together somehow got back in order to look like this, huh?

Alright, so I'm going to close by telling you how I got started in this very, very quickly. In 1964, I was assistant district attorney medical advisor to the district attorney and I would spend most of my time in the crime lab. Charlie McAnarney became a good friend, head of the crime lab and he said to me one day, he was in the program committee of the American Academy of Forensic Scientists, the largest and most prestigious group of forensic scientists in the world - he said: "Cyril, how would you like to represent the academy in the pathology section? The academy meets every year, the third week of February and each of the sections, pathology, toxicology, psychiatry, criminalistics, odontology, entomology, anthropology, nursing, they all meet separately and then they all have one big plenary session and they try to pick a subject that will be of interest to as many of the groups as possible. As so understandably, going into February of '65, you're the program chair, what would you select? The Warren Commission just came out, later September, October of '64, there's no question about that. So I said: "Sure Charlie."

So I went to the Carnegie Library. We have this magnificent library in Pittsburgh and there were the 26 volumes to show you what the government had in mind from the very beginning - 26 volumes, okay? I pick up the books to look at the index, I want to get to the autopsy and the medical stuff, there ain't no index, baby, there ain't no index. 26 volumes. Sylvia Meagher, a magnificent woman who wrote this wonderful book *Accessories After the Fact*, on her own, a single woman living in an apartment in downtown Manhattan working at the UN before computers were ever even dreamed of. Sylvia Meagher put together an index which is still used today, but the federal government, no, no, no index, okay?

So what I want to tell you, friends, as we conclude, is that this is the story, this is the background, you've heard from all of these wonderful people, you've heard the poignant words that Debra has given to you and others of the challenge that lies ahead. We got to keep fighting this battle. We got to keep in mind what it's about because, as they quickly ascertained, it wasn't the Russians, it wasn't the Chinese, it wasn't the Cubans. We have met the enemy and he is us.

They quickly realized, they knew what they were dealing with and we have to keep that in mind and people sometimes ask, you know, what does it mean, what is the importance, what is the significance, why should we continue in this very turbulent, controversial battle? Because we are Americans who believe in justice, who believe that governments should not be overthrown because some people in position of authority and power decide to get rid of the ruler and everywhere in the world where this kind of thing has happened, where a prime minister, a king, a premier has been killed, has been assassinated, we in our American arrogance do not hesitate for one moment to label it for what it was. We recognize it as a political assassination, we recognize it as the overthrow of the government and that is what the Kennedy assassination was in this country.

They were looking at five more years of Jacky, followed by eight years of Bobby – thirteen years is a lifetime in the political evolution of a country. This is not where we get into the last quarter of the basketball game or the third period of the hockey game or the ninth inning of the baseball game. Thirteen years, you can make a country move in any goddamn direction that you want to and that is exactly what happened.

Kennedy, in their eyes, doing what he was doing, human rights, civil rights, voting rights, getting out of Vietnam, angered about the Bay of Pigs fiasco, claiming that he would destroy the CIA, ripping up a piece of paper, throwing it into the air when he was meeting with Senator Mike Mansfield and saying “this is what I intend to do to the CIA.” It was running amuck. Its own government, get rid of Arbenz in Guatemala, get rid of Allende in Chile, get rid of the Diem brothers in Vietnam, anything that they wanted, they made the decision what was good for America because those people believe that when they see the flag flying and they hear the Star Spangled Banner, they see and hear something that we average, normal Americans, as loyal as we may be, we just fail to fully understand, to fully recognize what is necessary for America.

That is the arrogance of these people and that is why we must fight to make sure that it never happens again because what we witnessed in what was the assassination of President Kennedy, my friends, in plain, plain English was coup d’état in America, the overthrow of the government. That’s what this case was all about. Thank you.

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