

JFK Assassination planted evidence: "The bullet that supposedly struck both President Kennedy and Governor Connally—was very likely found on a stretcher used for a cut and bleeding two-and-one-half-year-old child." (excerpt from Six Seconds In Dallas by Josiah Thompson, 1967)

[pages 154-165]

Which Stretcher?

An investigation at Parkland Hospital, including the reenactment of the bullet's discovery in the presence of the principal witnesses, has disclosed that [399](#) was actually found on a stretcher unrelated to the care of either Connally or Kennedy. The history of 399 is complex. Before attempting to offer a plausible account of how it came to be discovered on a stretcher in Parkland Hospital, it is imperative that we understand clearly what is known and unknown about both its discovery and subsequent transmission to Washington. The place to begin is at the FBI Crime Laboratory in Washington on the night of November 22.

We know that Robert Frazier of the FBI Crime Lab received 399 on the evening of November 22 from another FBI agent, Elmer Todd ([3H428](#), [24H412](#)). They both marked the bullet with their initials ([24H412](#)). Todd, in turn, had received it a few minutes earlier from Chief Rowley of the Secret Service, who had been given it by one of his agents, Richard Johnsen ([24H412](#)). When Johnsen turned the bullet over to Rowley he attached [a short note of explanation](#) which reads as follows:

The attached expended bullet was received by me about 5 minutes prior to Mrs. Kennedy's departure from the hospital. It was found on one of the stretchers located in the emergency ward of the hospital. Also on this same stretcher was rubber gloves, a stethoscope and other doctors' paraphernalia. It could not be determined who had used this stretcher or if President Kennedy had occupied it. No further information was obtained. Name of person from whom I received this bullet

Mr. O. P. Wright

Personnel Director of Security

Dallas County Hospital District

By Richard E. Johnsen

Special Agent

7:30 p.m.

Nov. 22, 1963 (18H800)

- <https://i.imgur.com/jk1PMFy.jpg> These two photos show the location of the stretcher and the bullet in the elevator vestibule at Parkland Hospital.

Since the presidential party departed from Parkland Hospital at approximately 2:00 P.M. ([18H726](#), [744](#), [756](#)-757), we infer that Agent Johnsen received the bullet from Mr. Wright at approximately 1:55 P.M.

Wright first learned of its existence when hospital engineer Darrell Tomlinson came to him and told him of its discovery on a hospital stretcher. Together they went to a vestibule where the bullet was seen to lie on a stretcher blocking the corner entrance to the men's room. The bullet lay exposed between the stretcher mat and its rim. Wright examined it and then went to find a federal officer who would take custody of the bullet. After one refusal from an FBI agent, he found Agent Johnsen, who agreed to accept the bullet. From this information we can draw the very important conclusion that *Tomlinson found the bullet between 1:45 P.M. and 1:50 P.M. on November 22*. Much later Tomlinson and Wright were shown CE 399 and both declined to identify it as the bullet they each handled on November 22 ([24H412](#)).¹⁷

- <https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=1138#relPageId=697&tab=page> Sketch drawn by Darrell Tomlinson during his interview with Assistant Commission Counsel Specter. Note position of stretcher A (taken from the elevator) and stretcher B (found by Tomlinson in vestibule). Much to Specter's consternation, Tomlinson testified he found the bullet on stretcher B.

In a report dated November 30 Richard Johnsen reiterates what his note of November 22 had affirmed, namely, that Mr. Wright had told him that the stretcher on which the bullet was discovered also carried "rubber gloves, a stethoscope, and other doctors' paraphernalia" ([18H799](#)). Again in November, 1966, Mr. Wright told me that this was the case. He also verified that the stretcher on which the bullet rested was the one in the corner—the one blocking the men's room door. All these seemingly trivial details become important when we turn to the testimony of Darrell Tomlinson, the man who first discovered the bullet.

Tomlinson was interviewed by Assistant Counsel Specter on Mar. 20, 1964. To aid in his testimony, Tomlinson drew a small sketch of the vestibule area that is reproduced to the left. He had come to the vestibule shortly after 1:00 P.M. in answer to a call for someone to operate the elevator ([6H129](#)):

Mr. SPECTER. Was there anything on the elevator at that time?

Mr. TOMLINSON. There was one stretcher.

Mr. SPECTER. And describe the appearance of that stretcher, if you will, please.

Mr. TOMLINSON. I believe that stretcher had sheets on it and had a white covering on the pad.

Mr. SPECTER. What did you say about the covering on the pad, excuse me?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I believe it was a white sheet that was on the pad.

Mr. SPECTER. And was there anything else on that?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I don't believe there was on that one, I'm not sure, but I don't believe there was.

Mr. SPECTER. What, if anything, did you do with that stretcher?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I took it off of the elevator and put it over against the south wall.

...

Mr. SPECTER. Was there any other stretcher in that area at that time?

Mr. TOMLINSON. There was a stretcher about 2 feet from the wall already there ([6H129-130](#)).

Assistant Counsel Specter then asked Tomlinson: "Will you mark with a 'B' the stretcher which was present at the time you pushed stretcher 'A' off the elevator?" ([6H130](#)). Tomlinson complied and then went on to explain how he made several trips up and down on the elevator. Sometime later he noticed that stretcher "B" — the vestibule stretcher—had been pushed out from the wall by someone entering the men's room:

Mr. TOMLINSON. Well, he pushed the stretcher out from the wall to get in, and then when he came out he just walked off and didn't push the stretcher back up against the wall, so I pushed it out of the way where we would have clear area in front of the elevator.

Mr. SPECTER. And where did you push it to?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I pushed it back up against the wall.

Mr. SPECTER. What, if anything, happened then?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I bumped the wall and a spent cartridge or bullet rolled out that apparently had been lodged under the edge of the mat. *

- Tomlinson's observation that the bullet "had been lodged under the edge of the mat" has fed attacks on the Commission's Report. For how, critics ask, could a bullet fall out of the Governor's thigh and manage to get "under the edge of the mat"? The record should be set straight on this detail. At no time did Tomlinson see the bullet roll out from under the mat. He told me that he pushed the stretcher against the wall and then heard a clink of metal on metal. He walked over and saw the bullet lying between the pad and the rim of the stretcher. It could have been lying there all along, and taken a roll only when he pushed the stretcher. Or it could have rolled out from under the pad. Tomlinson agreed that neither he nor anyone else will ever be able to judge with certainty which one of these two possibilities was in fact the case.

Mr. SPECTER. And that was from which stretcher?

Mr. TOMLINSON. I believe that it was "B".

Mr. SPECTER. And what was on "B", if you recall; if anything?

Mr. TOMLINSON. Well, at one end they had one or two sheets rolled up; I didn't examine them. They were bloody. They were rolled up on the east end of it and there were a few surgical instruments on, the opposite end and a sterile pack or so ([6H130-131](#)).

Could it have been President Kennedy's stretcher on which Tomlinson found the bullet? Almost certainly not. The President was taken to Trauma Room 1, where he was pronounced dead at 1:00 P.M. His body remained on this stretcher in Trauma Room 1 until the casket arrived at 1:40 P.M. ([18H814](#)). It was then lifted up and placed in the casket while the stretcher was stripped of sheets and rolled across the hall into Trauma Room 2 ([6H138](#), [142](#), [146](#)). There is every reason to believe that the President's

stretcher was still in Trauma Room 2 when the presidential party departed at 2:00 P.M. But Tomlinson found the bullet at approximately 1:45 P.M. Thus, the Kennedy stretcher could not have been the one on which the bullet was found because (1) it was stripped of linen while Tomlinson's stretcher carried both sheets and equipment, and (2) its movements are accounted for until after the time the bullet was found.

Could it have been Governor Connally's stretcher? No again, and here we differ with the Commission. When the presidential limousine arrived at Parkland Hospital, two stretchers were brought out to accommodate the wounded men, one from Major Surgery, the other from OB/GYN ([6H135](#)). The President and the Governor were placed on these stretchers, which, after pausing at the Triage Desk, were taken into Trauma Rooms 1 and 2.

In Trauma Room 2 Governor Connally's clothes were removed, * a bandage was applied to his chest wound, and a drainage tube inserted ([6H84](#), [116](#)). Before the Governor's clothing had been completely removed, Dr. Shaw (the thoracic surgeon) arrived and said the Governor could be taken up to Surgery ([6H84](#)). His stretcher was wheeled out of Trauma Room 2 into the emergency elevator, and carried up to the second-floor operating suite ([6H117](#)).

When the elevator reached the second floor, the stretcher was wheeled into the operating suite to a point just outside Operating Room 5 ([6H121](#)). The Governor was then lifted up and placed on an operating room table ([6H121](#), [126](#)). Jane Wester, R.N., pushed the stretcher some 20 or 30 feet in the direction of the elevator, removed "several glassine packets of hypodermic needles . . . some alcohol sponges, and a roll of 1 inch tape," and then turned the stretcher over to Orderly R. J. Jimison ([6H122](#)).

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Jimison rolled it the remaining distance into the elevator and closed the door ([6H126](#)). Since anesthesia was started on the Governor at 1:00 P.M. ([Archives, CD 379](#)), and since Jimison testified that the stretcher was put on the elevator "less than 10 minutes" after Governor Connally entered the Operating Room ([6H127](#)), we can conclude that the Governor's stretcher was put on the elevator in the interval 1:00-1:05 P.M.

- I talked to Rosa Majors, a nurse's aide at Parkland, who removed the Governor's trousers, shoes, and socks. She told me that after removing his trousers, she held them up and went through the pockets for valuables. Had a bullet fallen out of the Governor's thigh, it would have been trapped in his trousers. When Rosa Majors held them up, any such bullet should have fallen out and been discovered at that time. She told me she never saw any bullet while she was caring for Governor Connally. Much later she heard that a bullet was supposed to have been found on his stretcher. She can't conceive where such a bullet could have come from.

It was at just this time, we recall, that Darrell Tomlinson found stretcher "A" on the elevator and wheeled it off into the vestibule. According to Tomlinson, this stretcher had "a white sheet that was on the pad" ([6H129](#)). When asked by Specter if there was anything else on the stretcher, he replied: "I don't believe there was on that one" ([6H129](#)). Jimison last remembered the Connally stretcher as empty except for the sheets:

Mr. SPECTER - *What was on the stretcher at that time?*

Mr. JIMISON - *I noticed nothing more than a little flat mattress and two sheets as usual.*

Mr. SPECTER - *And what was the position of the sheets?*

Mr. JIMISON - *Of course, them sheets was, of course, as usual, flat out on the bed.*

Mr. SPECTER - *Had they been rolled up?*

Mr. JIMISON - *More or less, not rolled, which, yes, usually they is, the mattress and sheets are all just thrown, one of them about halfway, it would be just thrown about halfway.*

Mr. SPECTER - *Were the sheets flat or just turned over?*

Mr. JIMISON - *Well, just turned over ([6H126](#)).*

Jimison went on to testify that there were no other stretchers placed on the elevator from the second floor up until 3:00 P.M. ([6H127](#)). Subsequent inquiries at Parkland Hospital disclosed that in the interval 12:30-2:30 P.M. no patients besides Governor Connally were treated in Surgery (second floor) or in the Delivery Rooms (third floor). Since any stretcher found in the elevator must have come from one of these two floors,¹⁹ it seems virtually a certainty that the stretcher found in the elevator by Tomlinson at approximately 1:00 o'clock belonged to Governor Connally. The description of the Governor's stretcher given by Jimison matches Tomlinson's description of the stretcher he found in the elevator.

Yet Tomlinson maintains that the bullet was not found on the elevator stretcher (stretcher "A") but on the vestibule stretcher (stretcher "B"). This stretcher, which he found already present in the vestibule at 1:00 P.M., carried two rolled-up bloody sheets, doctors' equipment, some gauze pads, and rubber gloves. It would seem that the stretcher on which the bullet was found was used neither in the care of Governor Connally nor President Kennedy, but in the treatment of some other patient unconnected with the assassination. But if so, which patient? And how did it get its bloody sheets (rolled up at one end) and its medical equipment?

- <https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=1138#relPageId=180&tab=page> Emergency room registration list, which suggests a possible origin for the stretcher in the hallway on which bullet 399 was found.

Ronald Fuller

In the Emergency Room Admission Records for November 22 we find Governor Connally admitted at 12:40 P.M.; his chief complaint was listed as "gunshot wound" and he was given admission number 24744 ([21H156](#)). The next admission number, 24745, was given to Ronald Fuller, age two and one-half, chief complaint: "fell" ([21H156](#)). Ronnie Fuller was admitted 14 minutes after the Governor at 12:54 P.M. ([21H156](#)). It is one of history's final ironies that Commission Exhibit 399—the bullet that supposedly struck both President Kennedy and Governor Connally—was very likely found on a stretcher used for a cut and bleeding two-and-one-half-year-old child.

Triage Orderly Joe Richards reported that he helped lift Governor Connally out of the presidential limousine. After pushing the Governor into Trauma Room 2, he helped some Secret Service men find telephones. Then:

Minutes later, a lady brought her child to the Registration Desk [Triage Desk] with a cut chin, and I carried him back, placed him on a carriage [stretcher] in the hallway near the Nurses' Station. After the mother calmed down enough to register the child in, I escorted her to where he was (21H226)

The "hallway near the Nurses' Station" is in Major Surgery not far from Trauma Rooms 1 and 2 (see diagram). Aide Shirley Randall corroborates Richards' account:

Just as I got out there, a lady brought her little boy in who had been cut on the jaw. Blood was all over he [sic] and the child. She started to faint and the triage orderly [Richards] grabbed the child and I grabbed the mother and took her to the nearest chair. Miss Lozano watched her while I went right across from the desk to the Blood Bank and got some ammonia for the mother to smell; she got alright then. I led her to the Emergency Room and found a booth in [Major] Medicine for the doctor to suture the baby. That is when he told me and some more aides that the President was dead (21H218).

The little boy with the bloody cut is undoubtedly Ronnie Fuller. But when did all this occur? The admissions list places his admission at 12:54 P.M.? Was he put on the stretcher and removed from it in time for Tomlinson to find it empty shortly after 1:00 P.m.? The statement of Aide Era Lumpkin furnishes some assistance:

The doctors got ready to take Gov. Connally up to second floor to Surgery. I left out of trauma II and went back into Maj. Surg. near the nurses' station.

Someone brought in this baby that was all bloody. Mrs. Nelson said, "Rosa, you and Era take the baby and put him on a cart". We got the baby's clothes off, trying to determine from where the blood was coming. I spotted the cut on the cheek. I asked about the mother. No one knew where she was. I went out to the desk and was told the mother was on her way inside the Emergency Room.

When I got back into the Emergency Room, the mother had arrived. A doctor said, "Put the child in a booth." So we put the child in a booth. The child was crying so loud, someone asked us to carry the baby in major medicine and set up a booth for suturing (21H208-209).²¹

- <https://i.imgur.com/PsUJj3j.jpg> The known and possible movements of Ronald Fuller and his stretcher.

Ronnie Fuller arrived at Parkland Hospital shortly before the Governor was taken up to Surgery. Bleeding profusely, the little boy was placed on a stretcher "in the hallway near the Nurses' Station." He stayed there for only a brief time before being picked up and carried into Major Medicine. He left behind a stretcher whose sheets were soiled with blood. This is as far as we can trace Ronnie Fuller's stretcher. We cannot know for certain that it was then rolled some 30 feet into the elevator vestibule where, shortly after 1:00 P.M., it was seen by Tomlinson. Certain facts, however, indicate that this is what happened.

It was standard hospital procedure to shift used stretchers into the elevator vestibule. The bloody sheets clearly would label this stretcher as "used," and the crowded conditions in Major Surgery would necessitate its speedy removal. Then, too, there was the equipment found on the vestibule stretcher—gauze pads, rubber gloves, stethoscope, and "other doctors' paraphernalia." Rosa Majors told me that she and Era Lumpkin had used gauze pads to clean the child, that either she or Era had been wearing rubber gloves, and that Era had had a stethoscope.²² She cannot remember what happened to this equipment—the events of that afternoon were so confusing. But it is possible that it was left behind on the stretcher when the two aides carried Ronnie Fuller into Major Medicine.

We do not know for certain that it was Ronnie Fuller's stretcher on which CE 399 subsequently was found. We know his stretcher was empty and 30 feet from the vestibule at approximately 1:00 P.M. We know that standard hospital procedure would require its movement into that vestibule. We know that it carried bloody sheets and that gauze pads, rubber gloves, and a stethoscope were used in the treatment of its last patient. All this only establishes the likelihood that Ronnie Fuller's stretcher was the one in question. As with most aspects of this case, final certainty again eludes us.

Yet if we cannot know with certainty the identity of the stretcher on which the bullet was found, we can know a far more important fact with something approaching certainty: Whatever stretcher the bullet was found on, it was *not* a stretcher used in the care of either President Kennedy or Governor Connally. On this one fact hangs a considerable mystery.

[pages 173-177]

NOTES

[...]

17 . In the report of the FBI agent who showed Tomlinson and Wright CE 399 we learn that although neither could positively identify 399 as the bullet they handled on November 22, nevertheless they thought it bore a general resemblance to 399. This makes all the more strange what Wright told me in November, 1966.

I asked him what the bullet looked like, and he replied that it had a pointed tip like the one I held in my hand (earlier he had procured a .30 caliber unfired projectile that we had placed on the stretcher cart in our reenactment). I then drew three bullet shapes: one pointed like the .30 caliber; another long with rounded tip—like 399; still another squat and rounded, like a .38 caliber. Wright picked the pointed tip as the one that most resembled the bullet found on the stretcher. I then showed him photographs of CE's 399, 572 (the two ballistics comparison rounds from Oswald's rifle), and 606 (revolver bullets), and he rejected all of these as resembling the bullet Tomlinson found on the stretcher. Half an hour later in the presence of two witnesses, he once again rejected the picture of 399 as resembling the bullet found on the stretcher. Sometime later he asked me if one of the pictures I had shown him was supposed to be the bullet found on the stretcher. I replied, "Yes," and he seemed quite prepared to stick by his story. As a professional law-enforcement officer, Wright has an educated eye for bullet shapes. Tomlinson's recollection of bullet shapes was not very clear, and he could say only that the bullet found resembled

either [CE 572](#) (the ballistics comparison rounds) or the pointed, .30 caliber bullet Wright had procured for us.

- <https://i.imgur.com/MNSGVAY.jpg> O.P. Wright believes that the stretcher bullet he examined on November 22 looked like the sharp-nosed bullet above. The Commission, however, insists it was blunt-nosed CE 399, below.

This is an appalling piece of information, for if Wright's recollection is accurate, then CE 399 must have been switched for the real bullet sometime later in the transmission chain. This could have been done only by some federal officer, since it was in government possession from that time on. If this is true, then the assassination conspiracy would have to have involved members of the federal government and been an "inside" job.

18 . Miss Wester also mentioned that she believed she had rolled up the sheets on this stretcher, a detail that is in conflict with the testimony of Jimison ([6H126](#)) and Tomlinson ([6H129](#)). I asked her about this in May, 1967. She pointed out that she couldn't be certain she had rolled up the sheets since this was not standard hospital procedure— "sometimes you do, sometimes you don't." She continued in this vein: "You have to take into consideration the fact that the operating room at that time was not anywhere near the normal state that it usually is. And when you have something like 15 or 30 people standing very close trying to get into the OR and us trying to keep them out, you have a problem. It was mass confusion. So like I say, that is the best I can remember. I... maybe, I remembered wrong. I don't know."

19 . On November 22 this elevator operated only from the basement to the third floor, with floors one through three being patient treatment areas.

20 . Ronnie Fuller most likely arrived at the hospital Emergency Room some minutes before this. This time was recorded by a time clock after the admission slip was filled out. As Shirley Randall indicated, the mother fainted upon arrival in the Emergency Room. Since she had to be revived before the admission slip could be filled out, 12:54 gives a very late time for the child's arrival; 12:45 to 12:50 would be a more accurate estimate.

21 . Due to a new hospital rule prohibiting interviews with Parkland personnel, I was unable to interview Shirley Randall, Joe Richards, or Era Lumpkin. Before this rule went into effect I had the good fortune to interview Rosa Majors, who cleared up two points of possible confusion in Era Lumpkin's statement: (1) Richards and Randall stated that Richards placed the child on a stretcher while Era Lumpkin leaves the impression that she and Rosa Majors did this. Rosa Majors told me that Richards took the child and placed him on a stretcher near the Nurses' Station in Major Surgery. (2) Era Lumpkin states that "someone asked us to carry the baby in major medicine." Does this mean "carry in the arms" or "carry on the stretcher"? I asked Rosa Majors this:

Thompson: So you took the child in your arms?

Majors: We carried it and laid it in there on the carriage.

Thompson: Now where was the carriage?

Majors: It was in the Major Medicine area.

22 . It seemed strange to me that nurses' aides would be equipped with stethoscopes. I was told that this was to enable them to monitor frequently the blood pressure of Emergency Room patients.