



### A196 Ballistics Evidence in the JFK Assassination: Just the Facts!

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about the documented ballistics evidence in the JFK assassination, and how modern forensic science techniques have impacted the understanding of the case. Attendees can implement the forensic information learned into their research studies and investigation of the assassination.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing attendees with a comprehensive knowledge of the ballistics evidence in the JFK assassination. New information reported by respected investigators from the academic, forensic scientific, legal, and medical communities will impact attendees in terms of their knowledge and competence pertaining to this case.

After nearly fifty years of study, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy remains an unsolved case in the eyes of many forensic experts and the general public. Within months of the 1963 assassination, and, in particular, after the release of the Warren Commission Report in September 1964, doubts began to emerge as to the veracity of some of the conclusions in the Report. The Commission's findings concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone in assassinating the President and assured the public that there had been no conspiracy.<sup>1</sup>

By the mid-1960s, several books and media articles raised legitimate questions regarding the lone assassin theory.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Following a high-profile investigation and trial led by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison (1969) and several Congressional investigations related to the assassination, including the Rockefeller Commission (1974), the Church Committee hearings (1975-76), and the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA, 1977-79), much new forensic evidence was brought to light. The last official verdict, released by the HSCA in 1979, concluded "on the basis of the evidence available, that President John F. Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy."<sup>5</sup>

With the founding of the Assassination Archives and Research Center (1984) and the Coalition on Political Assassinations (1994), which served as national networks for serious researchers into the JFK (and other) political assassinations, and augmented by materials being obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a growing demand for the release of assassination records led to the creation and subsequent extension of the Assassination Records Review Board (AARB), which held the power to order Federal agencies to supply all materials considered to be Kennedy assassination records to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) by a specified date. During its tenure, the AARB oversaw the release of more than four million pages, the largest release of classified documents in U.S. history.<sup>6</sup>

The newly released AARB files provided JFK assassination researchers with a windfall of new forensic information, including pertinent medical, ballistics, photographic, acoustics, and trace evidence. This presentation will report and discuss much of that evidence, including X-ray images of the President's skull, bullet fragments recovered from the limousine, and the state-of-the-art digital replication of the Zapruder film original. A discussion focused on the ballistics evidence, which interconnects with the aforementioned forensic information, will be presented in a logical manner based on reliable factual evidence. The Hon. John Tunheim, Chairman of the Assassination Records Review Board, described the JFK assassination as "a giant jigsaw puzzle with a lot of missing pieces."<sup>7</sup> It is hoped that after hearing this presentation, attendees will be able to put some of those pieces back in the puzzle.

#### References:

1. Report of The President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964:18-25.
2. Epstein EJ. Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth. New York: Viking Press, 1966.
3. Lane M. Rush to Judgment. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
4. Thompson J. Six Seconds in Dallas. New York: Bernard Geis & Associates, 1967.
5. U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Assassinations. The Final Assassination Report. New York: Bantam Books, 1979.
6. Assassination Records Review Board. Final Report of the Assassination Records Review Board. Washington, DC, 09/30/98. (Link: <http://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/review-board/report/arb-final-report.pdf>).
7. Tunheim JR. The Accomplishments and Obstacles of the Assassination Records Review Board. Address: A National Symposium on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the JFK Assassination. Duquesne University School of Law, 11/22/03 (DVD: Into Evidence: Truth, Lies and Unresolved Mysteries in the Murder of JFK. ASIN: B0007LNHYS, 2004).

#### Ballistics, JFK Assassination, Forensic