

# THE DOCTORS' HARD FIGHT TO SAVE HIM

By Earl Ubell  
*Science Editor*

The bullet that crashed through President Kennedy's neck and head probably took with it blood vessels and nerves leaving his entire body stunned and helpless. The chances are that he felt no pain. The Dallas doctors tried to massage his heart from the outside, to no avail.

In Dallas, Dr. Malcolm Perry, 34, attendant surgeon at Parkland Hospital who attended the President, said he saw two wounds—one below the Adam's apple, the other at the back of the head. He said he did not know if two bullets were involved. It is possible, he said, that the neck wound was the entrance and the other the exit of the missile.

Dr. Perry said that the President arrived in a critical condition and already was moribund. Probably because breathing centers in the brain were affected, the President was having trouble breathing. To help him breathe, Dr. Perry performed a tracheotomy; he slit the President's windpipe from the outside and placed a tube in the throat.

The doctor and his colleagues also marshaled an oxygen pump to keep as much of the vital gas flowing to the President as possible.

Against the possibility that air might have infiltrated

the President's chest between the lungs and the chest wall, the doctors insert tubes to help him breathe.

Dr. Kemp Clark, the hospital's chief of neurosurgery and one of the ten physicians summoned, was on hand in case some brain repair was necessary. By the time he arrived, the President's heart had stopped.

It was at this point that Dr. Perry attempted to get the heart going again by pressing on the President's breastbone from the outside. This maneuver squeezes the heart muscle and keeps blood flowing to the brain and the rest of the body. It is the method of choice, preferred to opening the chest and massaging the heart directly.

To make up for the blood loss and possible internal hemorrhages, the doctors also gave blood transfusions, reported of type B, Rh positive. They also administered salt solutions by vein in the hopes of keeping up blood pressure.

Finally an electrocardiograph machine was attached to the President to keep track of his heartbeat. It was this device that finally recorded on a slip of paper the final pulse of the stricken President's heart.

The doctors, too busy to notice the clock, later arbitrarily set the time of death at 1 p. m. The President had lived 40 minutes from the time of the shooting.

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