

# LIBERATION

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## *editorial*

By and large the American people seem less interested in finding out who killed President Kennedy than they are in unravelling the latest Hitchcock mystery. We suspect that this is not because they did not love President Kennedy, or even because they are satisfied that the case is as cut and dried as the Warren Commission makes out, but rather because of a dim apprehension that to pursue the matter further might rob them of their political innocence.

After all, Americans are grateful to their politicians for bringing them the best of two worlds, the world of *realpolitik*, in which the United States for fifty years now has ended up with the lion's share of the profits and power, and the world of their professed founding ideals, in which, in theory at least, the United States eschews militarism and stands on the side of freedom, justice, and a rough equality. Thus Americans tend to be grateful to Adlai Stevenson for his

role in the United Nations, where he describes American foreign policy as if it were what Americans would like to think it is but know that it is not. Nobody fully believes him, at least not for long, when he indignantly denies the United States' latest treaty violation or interference in the internal affairs of another country, but they would be distressed not to have such an eloquent and humanitarian spokesman to wrap American power politics in the mantle of democratic idealism. They are grateful less for his Pyrrhic victories over other diplomats than for the support he gives to them, his fellow Americans, in their need to deceive themselves a little longer.

Something of the same psychology seems to be at work in the public reaction to the Warren Commission's Report. Unbelievably shocked and humiliated by the events at Dallas, Americans were tremendously relieved to have the whole sordid busi-

ness explained by the prestigious Commission in terms that justify continued faith in the health of American democracy and the stability of the American way of life. Everything is comfortingly accounted for by the purely personal aberrations of two unstable and politically isolated individuals, Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby, plus minor inefficiencies on the part of the F.B.I., the Secret Service and the Dallas police. Oddly enough, if this were an ordinary case of murder, such as the killing of a man's wife or business partner, with no frightening Pandora's box of socio-political implications, there is not a jury in the country that would have accepted the Commission's conclusions, not an appeals court anywhere (certainly not the U.S. Supreme Court, chaired by Chief Justice Warren) that would have tolerated its methods, which are so brilliantly exposed in this issue by Vincent Salandria. The press and public alike would be calling for an investigation of the conduct of the Dallas police and the F.B.I. who, to cite just one of many irregularities, between them interrogated Oswald for twelve hours but, in the strange words of the Warren Commission, "kept no notes and there were no stenographic or tape recordings." In any other case, there would be an horrendous outcry against any investigatory body which passed lightly over such matters. As the distinguished historian Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper has pointed out: "How could any statement made by Oswald be used against him if his statements were unrecorded? Even in the most trivial cases such a record is automatically made—and this case was the assassination of the President of the United States. If no record was available to the Commission, there can be only one explanation. The record was destroyed by the F.B.I. or the police, and the Commission, with culpable indifference, has not troubled to ask why."

Vincent Salandria brings out other, equally serious instances in which vital evidence was either destroyed or not examined by the Commission. In particular, the Commission's whole case for a lone gunman, firing from the Book Depository Building,

appears to depend in the last analysis on autopsy drawings which are admitted to be fabrications and which, as a matter of fact, are not even consistent with each other. Curiously, the actual photographs and x-rays of the wounds were not shown to the artist who made the drawings and were not offered in evidence to the Commission.

We do not know what prompted the Commission to produce its ponderous report and comforting conclusions without bothering to ask for these vital pieces of evidence, but Mr. Salandria's revelations should prompt a widespread public insistence that the photographs and x-rays be produced at once. We can only hope that the government will not change its story and, as in other crucial instances, fall back on the claim that they were never taken or have been destroyed. It is important to find out whether the actual photographs and x-rays of the wounds support the strange conclusions of the Commission or indeed substantiate the contrary implications of testimony by Governor and Mrs. John B. Connally, special agents Glen A. Bennett, Clinton L. Hill, Roy H. Kellerman, William Robert Greer, Hurschel Jacks and Samuel A. Kinney, F. B. I. agent Robert A. Frazier, Drs. Ronald Coy Jones, Marion Thomas Jenkins, Gene Colman Akin, Paul Conrad Peters, Adolph Hartung Giesecke Jr., Kenneth Everett Salyer, William Kemp Clark, Robert Nelson McClelland, Charles Rufus Baxter and Nurses Margaret Hinchliffe and Diana Bowron, all of Parkland Hospital in Dallas, and Dallas policemen B. J. Martin and B. W. Hargis.

Besides telling the American people what they desperately wanted to hear—that "ours is a stable, reliable democracy," as Arthur Sulzberger gratefully summed it up in the *New York Times* (September 24th, 1964)—the Warren Commission turned out a superficially plausible report and 26 volumes of evidence, which, since it is much too long for most people to read, let alone assimilate, was at first assumed to back up the Commission's conclusions. Now that the deed has been done—and Mr. Salandria and others have begun to expose it to public scrutiny—it seems

impossible that the Commission could have expected to get away with it in the long run, but the same could be said in retrospect of most of the egregious miscalculations of history. One hesitates to speculate whether the Commission found itself trapped and saw no other way out, or whether it was content to perform a mere holding operation, convinced that time was of the essence and that most Americans would judge charitably on the theory that the Commission's actions helped save American prestige and preserve American morale during an emergency, much as they have tended to exonerate Harry Truman for the atom bombing of Hiro-

shima and Nagasaki on the theory that he saved American lives and strengthened America's power position vis a vis the Russians. In any event, it is already a not very well kept secret that the Warren Report will not stand up to scientific analysis and objective inquiry, and the process of exposing its failings is well under way.

What most of us cannot possibly know is what the outcome of all this will be. It is important to realize that the obligation to press inexorably for the truth is independent of any ideas anyone may have as to who actually killed President Kennedy or why. The need is for a real inquiry

so that we may all know the truth, whatever it may be, not for additional hastily formulated conclusions that are tailored to meet anyone's political viewpoint or elitist hypothesis as to what is good or bad for the United States' reputation and morale. For ourselves we have no way of knowing at this stage whether this will turn out to be another Dreyfuss case or just a typical exercise of bureaucratic bungling that stems from the growing tendency in Washington to manipulate the news and deceive the public on the theory that the government know what it is best for us to know and think on all crucial matters.

D. D.

# The Realist

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## *The Kennedy Body Snatchers*

by Harold Feldman

The evidence is not yet all in, but the crime of murder may have been followed by a kidnapping in Dallas on November 23rd, 1963.

For a tiny coalition of bureaucrats and bodyguards to snatch President Kennedy's body out of Dallas, beyond the county which was holding a man for his murder, was almost certainly a crime. Literally, a crime. The Warren Commission, however, took no notice of the blatant appearances of such a crime. Instead, it offered a justification that must remind anyone of Jack Ruby's eloquent defense—*It was for Jackie and the kids!* The Warren Report states:

After the President was pronounced dead, O'Donnell tried to persuade Mrs. Kennedy to leave the area, but she refused. She said that she intended to stay with her husband. A casket was obtained and the President's body was prepared for removal.

We shall see that Kenneth O'Donnell, special assistant to President Kennedy, and his associates did something that Jack Ruby did not do. Ruby did not make Mrs. Kennedy *responsible* for his offense.

Mrs. Kennedy stood outside the emergency room where the Parkland Hospital physicians stretched their resources to the limit to save the President who was, to all intents and purposes, dead on arrival.

She kept walking in and out of the room. From time to time, she would sit on a folding chair outside the emergency room door, trying to get her thoughts and feelings in order. She refused the suggestion of a sedative. Her clothes were spattered with the blood and brains of her husband. She refused to change her clothing.

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## KENNEDY BODY SNATCHERS

(Continued from Cover)

She waited for the final news as though no one else were with her, as though nobody in this idiot element of politicians and flunkys had anything to do with her except her dying husband. "She was in a total daze," O'Donnell said.

She knew there was no hope for the President. Dr. Burkley, the President's personal physician, took her into the emergency room for the last time and she prayed for a few seconds. Told that the end had come, she walked to the table where her husband lay. She touched his foot, kissed the instep, and then walked to his side and felt his hand. She took off her wedding ring and slipped it on his finger. As a priest prayed, Dr. Burkley and Mrs. Kennedy made the responses.

In their testimony, O'Donnell and his friends never tire of telling us how important it was to get Mrs. Kennedy, and with her the body of John F. Kennedy, to Washington. Without ever daring to say so, they hint of imminent hysteria and collapse. But there is not the least shred of evidence that she was in the least out of control or out of reason.

Few widows have been crushed so suddenly and brutally as Jackie Kennedy was that day and few held up so well. She did not break. At no time was she irrational. Police Chief Curry tells us that she turned to someone who offered her a chair and said, "I am all right. Some of your people need to sit down more than I do."

Dr. Perry, working on the President, noticed that Mrs. Kennedy "was very composed."

Never was she asked "to leave the area," as the Warren Report puts it, except to go to a room several doors beyond when the casket was about to be wheeled in. She refused. But at that time the decision to take the body out of Dallas had already been made.

"I want to stay with him," she said, and went back to her chair.

"Our major concern," said Presidential aide Lawrence F. O'Brien to the Commission, "was that obviously you just could not leave Mrs. Kennedy sitting in this chair, drenched in blood. Something certainly had to take place."

But did this "something" have to be the illegal removal of the President's body—speeding it to a plane whose left rear seats had to be removed at the last minute to make room for the unexpected cargo, almost overturning and tumbling the casket in the process, rushing the body to Bethesda Naval Hospital for an autopsy she never considered? An autopsy, finally, which resulted in such distortion and withholding of evidence as to constitute perhaps still another crime!

Was it impossible for the President's body to remain in Dallas that afternoon, as the law required, and for her to stay nearby in Dallas?

This alternative, the only legal one and the most convenient, was never considered for a moment by the eager pretorian guard. Mrs. Kennedy was never allowed to consider any alternative. No one on the hospital's staff was permitted near her. Mrs. Nelson, nurse supervisor of the emergency room, wanted to bring her a glass of water but couldn't. The hospital administrator, Jack Price, was informed "that the secret service would not let anyone touch her or do anything for her."

Why these precautions, why this ugly haste on the part of trained, if not completely hardened members of the President's staff and guard? Mr. Price describes how a Secret Service agent came and asked for the fastest way to get the body out of the hospital. "He asked if we had a casket, a basket or anything that we could get to move the body immediately."

Their purpose can have only been to achieve what they did in fact achieve—to get the body quickly out of Dallas, out of Dallas jurisdiction, to prevent a Dallas autopsy.

We can think of several reasons that may have motivated such a step. But when they heap this awful responsibility onto Mrs. Kennedy, it becomes difficult to endure. This is what the Warren Report says:

Given a choice between the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Md., and the Army's Walter Reed Hospital, Mrs. Kennedy chose the hospital in Bethesda for the autopsy because the President had served in the Navy.

O you chivalrous lawyers and statesmen! A lady chose, and knights in tweeds, flannel and serge appear on all sides to do her bidding, regardless of cost, regardless of the law.

The Warren Report lies and lies again. Nothing was ever said to Mrs. Kennedy about an autopsy before she was on her way to Bethesda, and the evidence is strong that she had nothing to do with the decision to move the body.

Mr. O'Donnell gave us a glimpse into what happened, when he was questioned by Arlen Specter, Commission assistant counsel:

*Mr. Specter:* Who made that decision, by the way?

*Mr. O'Donnell:* Mrs. Kennedy."

*Mr. Specter:* That the autopsy should be performed?

*Mr. O'Donnell:* I don't think she knew anything about an autopsy. The question is where the body went. We didn't tell her there was to be an autopsy. And the choice was Walter Reed or Bethesda. He being a Navy man, she picked Bethesda.

Lawrence O'Brien, asked how Bethesda was chosen, walked around the question but, in doing so, opened a new view on what happened.

*Mr. O'Brien:* I don't recall any discussion of the reason specifically other than my assumption that the autopsy would take place at one of the military hospitals in Washington. And obviously there were two to select from, and the President being an ex-Navy man, it seemed just sort of normal to suggest Bethesda.

So? Bethesda was not chosen, Bethesda was suggested. And for an autopsy that was never mentioned to Mrs. Kennedy. No, she did not choose Bethesda for an autopsy, as the Commission asserts. Mrs. Kennedy never heard that suggestion.

Earlier, Mr. O'Donnell presented a different version of the sequence of events. He tells us in effect that the decision for Bethesda was made prior to any consultation with Mrs. Kennedy.

The government witnesses tell us that they were putting the body in the casket and getting ready to depart when two Dallas officials accosted them. One was from the Medical Examiner's office. The other was a justice of the peace. They were adamant on one point: It was a direct violation of the law to move a victim of homicide out of the state without an inquest and an autopsy. The body was already in the best Dallas hospital, they

said, and a legal autopsy could be undertaken at once.

This, said Mr. O'Donnell, *toujours chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, "was an impossible situation for Mrs. Kennedy." Why, he did not say.

But he went on to say that he proposed a compromise. He had the President's physician, Dr. Burkley, talk to them and suggest that they get a doctor to come along on the plane and "we would bring him immediately to the Naval Hospital" where he could stand by. The Dallas officials declined the suggestion.

What interests us here, though, is the admission by O'Donnell that the Naval Hospital in Bethesda had been chosen as Kennedy's destination before there is any word that Mrs. Kennedy had any choice in the matter.

According to Dr. Burkley's account, Mrs. Kennedy was confronted with the problem for the first time only after the plane was on its way. Dr. Kemp Clark had not yet pronounced the President dead when, he says, he ordered a death certificate prepared "to accompany the body to Washington."

When Mrs. Kennedy testified before the Warren Commission, she was never asked a thing about her weird trip from Dallas or about the autopsy.

At one point, O'Donnell confesses that he would have decided on the body removal even if the problem of Jackie had not forced his hand:

I realized that she was going to stay with her husband, no matter what anybody did, and there was no possible way of in any way of getting her to leave. And so, therefore, the only alternative I could see was that we move the President. It is an assumption I probably would have arrived at anyway, but I arrived at it in this manner.

It appears, then, that Kenneth O'Donnell was responsible for the decision to remove the President's body, possibly after a conference with Lyndon Johnson.

The Warren Commission tells us that Johnson would not leave for Washington without Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy would not leave without the body. O'Brien adds that O'Donnell went to consult Johnson after all hope for Kennedy was gone and that the decisions (1) for Johnson to go to Washington at once and (2) for Kennedy's body to be taken out of the hospital "forthwith" were both made then and there.

There is no evidence that Johnson was made aware of any opposition or interference from the Dallas authorities.

The President's body was not the only major evidence removed hastily and stealthily from Dallas that day. The President's limousine, spattered with blood and flesh debris, chrome dented and windshield cracked, was loaded on board another plane and flown out of the state for dismemberment and rehabilitation.

But at least, in the case of the car, we are spared the emetic plea that "we did it for Jackie."

The lives of four Presidents were ended by bullets. Of these, only the body of John F. Kennedy was autopsied outside of the city and state where he died.

Only in Kennedy's case did the man accused of the killing deny his guilt. Only in Kennedy's case were the number, location and direction of the bullets a subject of dispute and secrecy. Only in his case, therefore, was a proper autopsy more than a formality of the law but a necessity of justice. And only in his case was the autopsy carried out in circumstances of the most doubtful legality.

Lincoln died in Washington, D. C., and that is where

the investigation of his death naturally field died in the small burg of Elberon, New Jersey that is where his attending physicians and the Surgeon General performed the autopsy. The next day his body was en route to Washington to lie in state. McKinley was shot and died in Buffalo, New York. His body was subject to an autopsy a few hours later, then prepared for transfer to Washington for national honors.

Kennedy was shot at 12:30 p.m. He died at one o'clock. By 2 o'clock his body was on its way to the airport for a secret examination in Bethesda, Maryland.

In the ordinary course of things, the autopsy would have been performed, probably right at Parkland Hospital, that afternoon. The body could have been made ready for proper transfer to the White House that night.

Why didn't the law take its ordinary course in the case of John F. Kennedy?

The law of Texas is clear on the matter, and every State has similar laws. The Texas Code of Criminal Procedure provides that no murdered body can be removed without authorization from the Medical Examiner and/or the Justice of the Peace of the county or his authorized deputy; that the Medical Examiner shall immediately investigate a suspected homicide and file his report with the District Attorney; finally, that where an autopsy is deemed necessary, it is to be immediately performed by the Medical Examiner or his deputy. In sparsely populated counties the major responsibility falls on the Justice of the Peace—but in all counties, the law is clear: An autopsy must be performed under the supervision of the county authorities.

This law is the only legal authority by which a legal autopsy of the late President was possible. One naturally asks: By what authority was the autopsy in Bethesda carried out? Who signed the authorization form?

The Warren Commission casts no light on this point. It provides us with an exhibit photograph of a comminuted fracture of a goat's rib, but it omits the document that made possible the most important autopsy in American history.

In the light of the law and the published evidence of the Warren Commission, let us review what happened in the minutes before and after the President was pronounced dead.

After his rapid conference with Lyndon Johnson, O'Donnell called a quick meeting with Dr. Burkley, General McHugh (Kennedy's air force aide), and two Secret Service agents, Roy Kellerman and Andrew Berger. Dr. Burkley was to contact the Parkland doctors. Agents Sulliman and Stout were ordered to clear all the corridors and bar entrance to the area. A casket for the President was to be procured.

Dr. Burkley went back into the emergency room where Dr. Clark was finishing his efforts for the President. A priest was administering extreme unction. At Burkley's request, Dr. Clark signed the death certificate and, Clark says, he "gave this to him to accompany the body to Washington."

Once again, an indication that an illegal removal of the body was decided on very early in the game and before any deep consideration of Mrs. Kennedy's plight. Jack Price noted that the death certificate was being prepared before the priest was summoned to the death-table.

Dr. Clark evidently felt that his signing of the death

cate needed additional explanation. He was never questioned about it during a deposition in Dallas and a long hearing in Washington, so he finally brought the subject up himself.

Dr. Clark: . . . One other point, if I may here?

Mr. Specter: Yes.

Dr. Clark: In order to remove the President's body to Bethesda where the autopsy was to be performed, a death certificate had to be filled out in conformity with Texas State law to allow the body to be transported. This is the second part of the signing of the death certificate.

A very puzzling remark, obviously unfinished. The second part of Dallas death certificates, relating to the disposition of the body, is usually signed by an undertaker or judge. But the Commission counsel, Arlen Specter, who was petty and precise to exhaustion in a thousand other details, had no comment or question on Dr. Clark's obscure statement and hurriedly brought the hearing to an end.

The casket was obtained very quickly, in about twenty minutes. O'Neill Mortuary brought their best bronze de luxe coffin to the emergency platform of the hospital.

Hardly had it disappeared behind the swinging doors of the emergency room when, we are told, an agent of the Dallas Medical Examiner appeared and said "that the President could not be taken from the hospital."

We learn from other witnesses that this was not a "representative" of the Medical Examiner but Dr. Earl Rose, the Medical Examiner himself.

He was apparently not heeded at all for in a moment the ambulance was ready to leave and the casket, body and all, was being wheeled outside. O'Brien tells us, incidentally, that Mrs. Kennedy did not hear any of the altercations between the Federal officers and the Dallas authorities.

The government witnesses then tell us that a judge, probably Judge Brown, arrived on the scene. Joe B. Brown, who later tried the Ruby case, was listed as the acting coroner for the day but, he told me, he was not at Parkland Hospital at that time. The judge referred to in the testimony, therefore, could only be either Judge David Johnston or Judge Theron Ward, both of whom were there.

The judge, whoever he was, behaved in a cool, judicial manner. After making a phone call, he turned to Dr. Burkley within hearing of the others and declared that the murder of the President was a homicide case and, as such, subject to certain legal procedures. It seems he did not mention the word autopsy because O'Donnell says he "interpreted" one of the "procedures" to mean an autopsy.

The Federal team huddled together and came out ready for a fight. "We brushed them all aside," says O'Donnell, "and came out the same way we had come in, through the same doors." The victory was won, despite the protests of the Medical Examiner who was shouting quite loudly, "You can't do that, you can't leave here now!"

Mrs. Kennedy? She walked behind the coffin. O'Donnell describes her at that moment as "totally unaware of the problems that were then existing" and "perhaps confused as to the speed with which we were attempting to depart."

Andy Berger was in the driver's seat of the ambulance, we are told by witnesses for the government (although some hospital staff people say that the O'Neill

Mortuary people drove the body out in a hearse). Next to and behind him rode other Secret Service men. The casket was lifted aboard and Mrs. Kennedy was helped in beside it.

The Presidential aides climbed into a car alongside. Just before they took off for the airport, the man from the Medical Examiner's office tapped on the window. Special Agent Roy Kellerman rolled it down and heard the man say, "I will meet you at the mortuary." "Yes, sir," Kellerman replied. And the cars headed for the airport.

Was an inquest of any kind held on Kennedy's body?

The police homicide report on the assassination, made out long after the body was gone, has a slot for *Coroner Attending* but it is not filled out. In Dallas, the procedure is for a justice of the peace to hold an inquest, ask the Medical Examiner to perform an autopsy and make a report, after which the j.p. hands down a verdict. This was certainly not done in the case of Kennedy.

The Warren Report never pretends that there was an inquest. The testimony of the leading eyewitnesses are at one on the point that a judge and a Medical Examiner's agent were on the scene and protested the removal of the body.

But apparently there was an attempt to give the Secret Service action some legal blessing. David Johnston, one of ten justices of the peace in Dallas County, was at the Trade Mart for the luncheon in Kennedy's honor when he heard the news. A call came summoning him to Parkland Hospital.

Upon arriving there, he testified later, he "found Judge Theron Ward, the justice of the peace, Precinct 3, from Garland, handling the inquest on President Kennedy. They did not know Judge Ward and that's the reason they had called me, not knowing he was already there."

Steve Landregan, assistant administrator of Parkland Hospital, also suggests some effort at legality in the hectic business:

Within a very short time I noticed Dr. Earl Rose, who was attempting to make out the necessary legal papers for removal of the body. He seemed quite agitated and upset, and he was asking where Judge Ward was. During the next few minutes there was considerable activity trying to locate a justice of the peace and seemed to be some question as to whether or not an autopsy would be ordered on the president.

Now take note of the significant differences in Jack Price's account of the same incident:

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Earl Rose was seen in the area. He was very pale and agitated and stated that according to the law, the body could not be moved without an order from a justice of the peace or a decision made about a medicolegal [autopsy]. There was a frantic questioning of the people in the Emergency Room as to where a justice of the peace could be located.

Someone said Justice of the Peace Ward (or Hall) was across the hall in front of the Lab. I ran over and asked if he were there and directed him to the nurses station where Drs. Rose, Clark and a bevy of secret service men were in conference.

We learn nothing further about this episode in the Warren Report or the appended 26 volumes. The Report does not mention Judge Ward (or Hall). It has no record or even mention of an inquest.

When I telephoned Dr. Rose, he was reluctant to speak on any area outside of his range of authority as Medi-

cal Examiner which, in Dallas, is very limited. Yes, there was an inquest by Judge Ward, he told me, but he did not know if a record of the same was obtainable and he did not feel it was for him to say what the procedures and conclusions of the inquest were.

Until other evidence is available, we can only maintain tentatively that some kind of makeshift inquest took place, that it was held reluctantly and against the wishes of the Medical Examiner and the officiating judge. Many witnesses and the Warren Report itself describe the conflict.

Before the body could be taken from the hospital, two Dallas officials informed members of the President's staff that the body could not be removed from the city until an autopsy was performed. Despite the protests of these officials, the casket was wheeled out of the hospital, placed in an ambulance, and transported to the airport shortly after 2 p.m.

Further the Commission sayeth not. Another justice of the peace in Dallas told me that the legality of such an "inquest" would depend on whether the autopsy was specifically ordered for Bethesda, what the findings of the autopsy actually were, whether they were made known to the officiating judge, and whether a verdict was handed down thereafter.

We have not been told any of these things.

The ambulance carrying Kennedy's body and the Secret Service car were headed for the airport. O'Donnell instructed the agents to signal ahead "that as soon as we came through the gate, they were to close the gate and let nobody else in."

The ambulance pulled into Love Field and alongside of the Presidential plane, *Air Force One*. The seats were taken out of the left side of the craft, but the job of unloading and depositing the casket was still a harrowing one. "It was frightening," O'Donnell told the Warren Commission. The plane's ramp was too narrow for the casket and at any moment it looked like the box and its grisly contents would tumble. At last the work was done. General McHugh went down to the cockpit to order the pilot to take off at once.

The plane did not take off at once. O'Donnell had not counted on one thing: the presence of Lyndon Johnson.

We were all, O'Donnell said later, "under the assumption or apprehension that at some moment we either might not be granted clearance to take off, or that the hospital may have in some way gotten the police to intercept us." If there had been a legal inquest, if the removal of the body had been authorized, then O'Donnell's qualms and anxieties are not comprehensible. But despite these urgings of an unclear conscience, O'Donnell had to adjust his plan to the fact that Johnson was aboard, waiting to be sworn in as President of the United States.

When the plane didn't take off at his order, O'Donnell hurried down to the cockpit himself. There General McHugh told the nervous executive that Johnson had ordered the pilot to delay departure until he had been properly sworn in.

A conference between Johnson and O'Donnell followed, and the plane waited for Judge Sarah Hughes, who was to administer the oath. O'Donnell confesses that he never told Johnson his reasons for wanting to get the plane into the air immediately. "I didn't describe what I saw as the problems," he testified.

Instead he talked with the pilot, "to make sure they

didn't let anybody on the plane, or put down the ramps for anybody, except the judge, under any circumstances."

Judge Hughes arrived. At 2:38 p.m., about an hour and a half after John F. Kennedy died, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as 36th President of the United States, his wife and Mrs. Kennedy beside him. As near to collapse as Jackie is alleged to have been at the time, she stood by in her bloody clothing with perfect self-command to watch the administration of the oath. We have all seen pictures of that occasion.

A few minutes later the plane taxied down the runway and took off for Washington.

Mrs. Kennedy again refused to change her clothes on the plane. "I want them to see what they have done to Jack," she told Mrs. Johnson. (This remark of Mrs. Kennedy, according to Drew Pearson, was deleted from the Commission's transcript of Lady Bird Johnson's statement.) She refused food but did sip some coffee, perhaps something stronger. Dr. Burkley handed her two broken roses he had retrieved from the hospital floor, symbols and souvenirs of the flowering youth in the motorcade that morning. She thanked him and smiled.

When the plane landed at Andrews Air Force Base, she refused to leave the casket even for the trip to Bethesda. It was 6 p.m. She declined the offer of a helicopter and rode the hearse instead.

Before the hearse started, she spoke to Angier Biddle Duke, the State Department's Chief of Protocol. "Find out how Lincoln was buried," she said. Mr. Duke, I am sure, would not have thought Mrs. Kennedy was in helpless distress.

Robert Kennedy accompanied her to the Naval Hospital. Once there, she was taken to the 17th floor where other members of the Kennedy family joined them, Jean, Ethel, Pat and Eunice. There they stayed, while the physicians in the morgue led by Dr. James J. Humes, with the attendance of two admirals, had the President's body X-rayed and color-photographed, before surveying and sectioning all its surface and channels.

At the same time, Mr. Duke's 7 researchers in the Library of Congress worked furiously for 10 hours on the hour-by-hour reconstruction of Lincoln's funeral for the big parade to come.

At 4 a.m., before the first signs of the Saturday dawn, both jobs were finished. The President's body, no longer evidence in a murder case that would never come to trial, was carried to the East Room of the White House. Jackie Kennedy went upstairs. The report on the Lincoln obsequies was ready.

And the X-rays and colored photographs of the President's body, where are they? The Warren Commission never saw them.

The Commission accepted the verbal assurances of the Bethesda medical commander about the number, size and location of Kennedy's wounds, but they never asked for the only scientific proof that such wounds existed.

Instead, putting art before science, they admitted into evidence a drawing, marked Exhibit 385, prepared by an artist under Dr. Humes' supervision. It shows an arrow that has entered the base of Kennedy's neck from behind exiting just below his Adam's apple.

The evidence that no such wound existed but that