



EDITORIAL

# On the Assassination and Autopsy of John F. Kennedy

Charles A. Ragan, Jr., M.D.

Lambert Professor of Medicine and Chairman,  
Department of Medicine, Columbia University College  
of Physicians and Surgeons; Director, Medical  
Service, Presbyterian Hospital, N.Y.C.

□ Very shortly after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, the family removed the autopsy pictures and x-rays from the official record. To shield the family, particularly the children, as much as possible from further emotional blows, the materials were closely guarded from view, even to the extent that the Warren Commission investigators did not see them, since to do so would have meant they would have been published in the Commission report. Three years later, on October 29, 1966, the Kennedy family placed the pictures, x-rays, items of clothing, and other materials, in the National Archives, with the proviso that no one except certain specified government groups should be granted access to

them for five more years. The contract further specified that following this five year restricted period, only "recognized experts in the field of pathology or related areas of science or technology" would be allowed to see the items—a restriction which will remain in force for as long as any of the president's immediate family remain alive. At the same time, Burke Marshall, deputy dean of the Yale Law School, was selected by the family to decide just which "recognized experts" would be admitted.

According to a New York Times story, Mr. Marshall has said that in granting or denying permission, he would not consider whether applicants were supporters or critics of the Warren report; but only whether they had a serious historical purpose in seeing the material. At the time of this writing, only Dr. John K. Lattimer, of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, has been granted permission to view the materials.

His objective, detailed report in this issue records for medical history the comprehensive clinical facts in the case. Hopefully it will settle—for physicians at least—the controversy and speculation that have surrounded the death of our 35th President.

RESIDENT AND STAFF PHYSICIAN is honored that Dr. Lattimer has selected this journal to present his findings. □ □

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#### PRINTS OF KENNEDY MEMORIAL COVER AVAILABLE

Large size (16 x 22) natural color prints suitable for framing are available of this month's memorial cover by Alexander Ross. The prints encompass the entire oil painting (more than the area shown on our cover), and contain no wording of any kind. Image portion measures somewhat larger than 13 x 18, printed on beautiful white heavyweight paper measuring 16 x 22. Send name, address, and \$2.00 for each print desired to:

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Observations Based on a Review of the Autopsy  
Photographs, X-Rays, and Related Materials of the  
Late President John F. Kennedy • John K. Lattimer, M.D.



## 33 Observations Based on a Review of the Autopsy Photographs, X-Rays, and Related Materials of the Late John F. Kennedy

John K. Lattimer, M.D., Columbia University

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 35th President of the United States and the youngest man ever to be so elected, took office January 20, 1961. He was assassinated in Dallas, November 22, 1963.

Since that unforgettable Friday, and the following Sunday when the President's alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was himself slain by Jack Ruby, questions concerning the President's murder have plagued the public. But no one, outside of a select few government sponsored persons, was allowed to see the clinical materials which might have helped clarify those aspects of the President's death which have never been adequately explained.

Early this year, however, Dr. John K. Lattimer was granted permission by the Kennedy family representative to examine all of the pertinent materials in the National Archives, including the clothing, Oswald's rifle, and the autopsy photographs and x-rays (which even the Warren Commission itself had not been permitted to see). On January 7 Dr. Lattimer went to Washington and studied these materials at length. Here is his report.

### Editorial

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**ABOUT THE COVER**—It is not often that a medical journal "stops the presses" less than 30 days before delivery date to remake an entire issue, but when the editors of Resident and Staff Physician were advised that this journal had been chosen exclusively by Dr. Lattimer to publish his "Observations Based on a Review of the Autopsy Photographs, X-Rays, and Related Materials of the Late President John F. Kennedy," this decision was made. Pages already allocated to other articles were pulled, a scheduled cover was pushed aside, a new deadline was established and an immediate call went out to artist Alexander Ross to execute a special painting for this very special issue of Resident and Staff Physician. No small task, since time was of the essence.

We weren't even sure that we could get Ross, but from previous cover paintings that he has done for us—particularly the covers honoring Drs. Perrin Long and Frank Netter—we were convinced that Alex Ross was the man for the job. We were fortunate that he could and did accept the assignment.

The result—a classic oil that blends a young John Kennedy, the grave site at Arlington with its rough-hewn reddish granite and dark marble slab, and a symbolic "eternal flame" blazing skyward in memory of a vigorous man whose spirit lives on.

We do not use lightly the word "great"—but we believe that Alex Ross's sensitive and inspired rendition deserves just such an accolade.



(For a full rundown on Alex Ross's work, see page 71.)



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