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LBJ Silent On JFK Death Data

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The White House kept silent today on a request of Rep. Theodore R. Kupferman, R-N. Y., for an official examination of X-rays and photographs of President Kennedy's autopsy.

"There won't be a public reply," said George Christian, press secretary for President Johnson.

"As a rule when the President gets a letter like that—when copies are made public—he doesn't make a public reply," added Christian.

Kupferman asked to see the documents along with New York's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Milton Helpern and Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, chief coroner of Pittsburgh.

Today, Helpern denied that he was part of any attempt to force release of the autopsy X-rays and photographs of the President's body.

"I am not a partner with Mr. Kupferman in this attempt," Helpern said.

Acknowledging that he did speak with the congressman concerning the X-rays and photographs, Helpern said: "I spoke with him last November, and I told him I would be available if his request was granted.

"I have no particular feelings on the matter that I would care to comment on. I would prefer that if I did it at all, it would be done by official invitation from a proper authority. Even then, I would not want to be part of a team, I would like to go alone."

TURNED DOWN

Kupferman said in a letter to the President that his own request to examine the X-rays and photos with autopsy experts had been denied by Burke Marshall, attorney for the Kennedy family, and the National Archives in Washington where the material is stored.

Kupferman, a lawyer, wrote that he was "amazed" to learn that the X-rays and photos taken at the autopsy were not made available to the Warren Commission. They could have significant bearing upon the issue of whether the same bullet struck President Kennedy and Texas Gov. James Connally.

The congressman called upon the President to either give him, accompanied by Drs. Helpern and Wecht, the right to inspect the films or direct an official examination and make a public report on the findings.

The reply of Marshall, the former chief of the Justice Department's civil rights section and now a vice president and general counsel with International Business Machine, denying Kupferman's request explained the conditions set by the Kennedy family when the material was given to the National Archives.

Their wishes were that there was to be no examination for at least five years except by a "properly authorized federal government agency" and thereafter inspection would be limited to professionals qualified to evaluate medical evidence for serious historical purposes, wrote Marshall on Jan. 25.

"I have given careful consideration, because of your official position, to the question whether an exception should be made in your case, and have decided that there is no basis for that.

"I fully appreciate that in your case, there is absolutely no question of personal gain, or mere curiosity, but I am sure you will understand the compelling reasons against making distinctions based on my personal evaluation of someone's motives," concluded Marshall.