

# Mystery Cloaks Fate Of Brain of Kennedy

By FRED P. GRAHAM 8/27/72  
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WASHINGTON, Aug. 26 — The preserved brain of President Kennedy, plus microscopic slides of tissues removed from his bullet wounds, have been withheld, apparently by the Kennedy family, from the assassination evidence in the National Archives, a medical expert said today.

The expert, Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, was the first critic of the Warren Commission's report on the assassination to be allowed to see items from the autopsy on the President.

He asserted that questions about President Kennedy's wounds would remain unanswered so long as these objects were not available for examination. A spokesman for the Kennedy family replied that all evidence requested by the Justice Department had been placed in the Archives and that Dr. Wecht had turned to "offensive" probing because the evidence in the Archives did not support his doubts about the official finding that the assassination was the deed of Lee Harvey Oswald alone.

Dr. Wecht spent two days in the Archives last week examining the material. He made his assertions afterward in an interview at the Archives.

Interviews with Government officials and President Kennedy's former personal secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, disclosed that the slides and probably the brain, which was removed from the body in the autopsy in 1963 and was preserved in a container of formalin, were

Dr. Wecht, who is coroner of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pa., and a past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, said that the slides should show definitely if all of President Kennedy's gunshot wounds were from the rear, as was concluded by the commission of inquiry under the then Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Entering bullets burn and soil tissues around the wound of entry but not at the point of exit, he said. Thus, the microscopic slides could settle the question whether the bullets that passed through the President's head and body had been fired from the rear.

Examination of the brain is necessary, Dr. Wecht said, because photographs of the top of the removed brain, which were shown to him, disclose a sizable foreign object that could have been a flattened bullet fragment or a brain tumor.

In either event, he said, it is "unacceptable" that the public has never been told what it was. He described the object as a parallelogram at least one-half by three-quarters of an inch in size.

Will Ask Inspection The official report of the autopsy performed by three military physicians on Nov. 22, 1963, the day of the assassination in Dallas, did not mention the object. A subsequent panel of four physicians appointed by Ramsey Clark when he was Attorney General—they also were not shown the actual brain—reported the presence of an object in the photographs.

Dr. Wecht, who is both a pathologist and a lawyer, said he felt certain that the brain was still "around somewhere" and that he intended to ask Mr. Marshall to let a panel of experts inspect it. "Who would have taken the responsibility to destroy the brain?" he asked.

The records of the Warren Commission show only that the brain was "removed and preserved for further study" in the autopsy, and that the usual procedure was to remove the brain in the interest of preserving the specimen. It is standard procedure in such cases to remove the brain and to "fix" it in formalin to

# Mystery Surrounds Fate Of John Kennedy's Brain

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prepare it for tests. Usually, the tests are not concluded until after the burial, and the brain is then destroyed.

When the autopsy materials were placed in the National Archives in 1966 by Burke Marshall, a representative of the Kennedy family, the slides, the brain and possibly some other items were not included.

Mr. Marshall, who is a law professor at Yale University, said in an interview last night that he never had possession of the chest of items and that he had no knowledge of the brain or any other objects now in the Archives.

He said that Nicholas Katzenbach as Attorney General had ruled that certain X-rays, color transparencies and photographs taken at the autopsy were evidence relevant to the assassination, and that he, Mr. Marshall, obtained these from the Kennedy family and lodged them with the Archives in 1966.

Mr. Marshall said that other items had apparently not been requested by the Justice Department because "they have no bearing on who killed the President."

He deplored Dr. Wecht's "chasing after parts of the President's body because he hasn't found any evidence that anything else was wrong."

Foreign Object Shown Dr. Wecht, who is coroner of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pa., and a past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, said that the slides should show definitely if all of President Kennedy's gunshot wounds were from the rear, as was concluded by the commission of inquiry under the then Chief Justice Earl Warren.

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Dr. Cyril H. Wecht has charged that material was withheld from the National Archives.

tion of the bullet that is believed to have passed through President Kennedy's body, and of photographs and films taken at the scene—material never in the Kennedy family's possession that has been in the Archives for years—"destroy" the Warren Commission's theory that the same bullet caused the severe wounds to John B. Connally, then Governor of Texas, riding in the President's car.

He said that the bullet's "almost perfect" condition made it virtually impossible that it could have caused such damage, and that the angle of its path through President Kennedy's body made it unlikely that it could have struck Governor Connally in the car's "jump seat in front."

He concluded that Oswald could not have fired the three bullets so fast on his bolt-action rifle, adding, "This proves a conspiracy right there."

Dr. Wecht said that the autopsy pictures and X-rays turned over by the Kennedy family raised two additional questions.

Positions of Wound One is why the wound in the back of President Kennedy's head was stated in the Warren report to have been four inches lower than the pictures show, and why the Warren report's drawing shows the bullet wound in the back to be several inches lower than the photographs.

The other is a "little flap" of loose scalp that is visible just above the hairline on the back left side of the President's head. This might have been an entrance or exit wound, he said, but it has not been reported before.

Dr. Wecht said that he would write to Mr. Marshall, asking to lay all these questions to rest by again inspecting the materials, plus the brain and microscopic slides of the wounds, with a team of experts, including a radiologist, a neurosurgeon, a firearms expert, a criminologist and an examiner of questioned documents.

Mr. Marshall said, "If we were trying to hide something, we wouldn't have let Wecht see the materials." But he said it was "offensive for me to be all this probing—it is a terrible thing to do to a family."