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'We Were Oversensitive'

About Film, McCloy Says

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WASHINGTON (UPI) — John J. McCloy, a member of the Warren Commission, said Sunday that "for the sake of completeness" the official investigation of the Kennedy assassination should have included a look at the late President's autopsy photographs and X-rays.

The commission had the power to subpoena the films, he said, but chose not to. "we were perhaps a little oversensitive to what we understood was the sensitivities of the Kennedy family against the production of colored photographs of the body, and so forth," he said.

McCloy disclosed on the televised interview "Face the Nation" that Chief Justice Earl Warren, the commission chairman, discussed the photographs with the Kennedy family, which had them during the inquiry.

"I THOUGHT that he was really going to see them, but it turned out that he hadn't," McCloy said. The films subsequently were turned over to the National Archives with strict provisions against viewing by the public.



JOHN J. McCloy
Panel Member

"I think there's one thing I would do over again," McCloy said. "I would insist on those photographs and the X-rays having been produced before us."

McCloy, a New York lawyer, Republican and former chief U.S. disarmament adviser, said that even without inspecting the films the commission had "the best evidence" on the autopsy in the sworn testimony of the doctors who performed it at Bethesda

Naval Hospital, Md., no Nov. 23, 1963.

"WE COULDN'T have interpreted the X-rays if we'd had them," he said. "But probably it would have been better to have had them for the sake of completeness in view of all the to-do that's occurred since."

He was referring to questions raised about the autopsy on the basis of an FBI agent's preliminary report, later officially disavowed, that doctors placed the first bullet wound lower in the back than where they finally established it.

McCloy stood by the commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald killed Kennedy and was not part of any conspiracy. He said he had heard of no evidence that might warrant reopening the commission's inquiry.

HE ALSO dismissed as "a little incredible" the possibility of what his questioner called a "most heinous and massive conspiracy of all time, involving the very highest levels of government."

McCloy said such a conspiracy would have had to involve cabinet members, the FBI and other federal agencies and the commission itself, whose members "weren't beholden to any administration."

The idea of a whitewash under those circumstances, he said, would have been a "conspiracy of a character so mammoth and so vast that it transcends even some of the distorted charges of conspiracy on the part of Oswald."