

# Autopsy Finds Body Is

*Exhumation leaves no doubt of body's identity, doctors say*

By Dan Balz  
The Washington Post

Dallas—The body of accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was exhumed from a Fort Worth cemetery early yesterday, and after a four-hour autopsy, a team of doctors declared that "beyond any doubt" it was Oswald who had been buried in the grave 18 years ago.

The exhumation and autopsy of the man who was accused of killing President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, ended three years of legal maneuvering and put to rest the theory of a British author, Michael Eddowes, that there were two Oswalds—the real one who defected to the Soviet Union and a KGB agent, who posed as Oswald and had been buried as Oswald.

"Beyond any doubt—and I mean absolutely any doubt—the person buried under the name Lee Harvey Oswald is in fact Lee Harvey Oswald," said Dr. Linda Norton, an associate professor of pathology at the University of Alabama, who headed the team that examined the remains.

The team, which included two forensic pathologists and two forensic odontologists, based its findings on a comparison of Oswald's Marine dental records made before he defected to Russia and a set of 16 dental X-rays made yesterday.

Doctors also matched a defect on the left mastoid bone—behind the ear—with records of surgery done on Oswald as a young boy. In addition, two rings on the little finger of Oswald's left hand were identified by his widow, Marina Oswald Porter, as those placed there just before his burial in November, 1963. Oswald was shot to death by nightclub owner Jack Ruby two days after Kennedy was assassinated.

Jerry Pittman, a lawyer representing Ms. Porter, who had agreed to the exhumation more than a year ago, said Ms. Porter was "totally satisfied" by the results of the autopsy.

Eddowes, who financed the operation, said in a statement read by one of his lawyers, "Though surprised, I am in no way disappointed in the apparent disproving of my evidence of imposture. Rather, I have accomplished my objective in obtaining the exhumation, and I am glad for those

who have steadfastly maintained the contrary for whatever reason."

The exhumation, which began in darkness early yesterday, was made possible when Oswald's older brother, Robert, decided to drop his legal fight to prevent the removal of the body.

Security guards arrived about 4 AM (5 AM EDT) yesterday at the gravesite at Rose Hill Burial Park in Fort Worth and began digging at about 6:45 AM (7:45 AM EDT). A tent had been placed over the gravesite "for dignity," according to cemetery manager Neil Wretberg. Nonetheless, news helicopters hovered over the cemetery. Reporters and photographers, who had been alerted to the exhumation late Saturday, were able to get no closer than 30 yards.

William C. Dear, a private security agent who was in charge of security, said the vault was cracked, and the oak casket had deteriorated so badly that a makeshift pasteboard box was needed to lift the casket and body out of the grave. The body was badly decomposed, according to the doctors.

The autopsy began at about 10:30 AM at Baylor University Hospital in Dallas, with about 15 people present. A court reporter made a record of the autopsy, and the entire operation was videotaped at Ms. Porter's request.

Norton said there was no evidence that the casket had been tampered with during the 18 years it had been in the ground.

Because of the deterioration of Oswald's body, doctors severed the skull from the neck and removed the skull for the dental examination. According to Dr. Irvin Sopher, West Virginia state medical examiner and professor of pathology at West Virginia University's medical school, Oswald's teeth were first cleaned, then X-rayed and charted. The teeth and new X-rays were compared with earlier written records and X-rays retrieved from medical archives of the armed services.

Saying that the matching of dental records can be "as exact as a fingerprint," Sopher said there "is no doubt that the in-life records and the X-rays match the body in the casket."

The autopsy concluded at about 2:20 PM (3:20 PM EDT). Oswald's remains were put into a new metal casket for reburial in the original gravesite.

## Oswald's





AP Photo



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Michael Eddowes, who paid for the exhumation of Oswald's body, stands near the grave site in Fort Worth, watching the work. Later, Marina Oswald Porter, center, leaves Baylor Hospital after the autopsy on her late husband.



UPI Photo

Eighteen years later the body of Lee Harvey Oswald is driven past the Texas Schoolbook Depository, the spot from which he is accused of shooting Kennedy