

Your new Grenshaw is good! Glad you got what I suggested and could add what Gerry got.

I made a few notes I think you can read, one where I remembered incorrectly, from his 78, and you can take that out and limit it to what you saw and heard on 20/20. \*

-There is one point where after mention suits he has "Secret Service" so I'd eliminate those few words. Not necessary and you can substitute what I suggested, "his way of slurring the Secret Service."

\* He could not have had the tie on without the shirt in place.

Hastily,

H 5/11/92

A Medical Monstrosity

by

David R. Wrone

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Charles A. Crenshaw with Jens Hansen and J. Gary Shaw, JFK

Conspiracy of Silence. Foreword by John H. Davis.

New York: Signet Books, April 1992. Softcovers. Pp. xvi,

205. \$4.99. No notes. No bibliography. *NO INDEX*

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Of the many books on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy that should never have been published this is, certainly one. Unfortunately its beguiling brevity, stark simplicity, and easy availability will enable many thousands to find, read, and absorb its great distortions, wild conjectures, and many errors, all lightly peppered with facts, in the illusory belief they are obtaining an inside view of what really happened.

*third* On November 22, 1963, Dr. Charles A. Crenshaw worked in Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital, in his ~~second~~ year as a resident in surgery, a role that made him a bit player in the tragic events that followed. In this capacity he assisted the

medical team who worked in a futile heroic effort to save President Kennedy's life in Trauma Room No. 1. On November 24 the young doctor was present in Trauma Room No. 2 where another team attempted to save the life of the alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. After 28 years he decided to set down his troubled memories of those tragic days, in order, he writes, to provide the public and the records of history with his observations that the 35th President died from gunshots fired from the front and thus an act of conspiracy.

His explanation for his long-delayed outburst of patriotism—surely it was not the fame accruing to an assassination-book author when they were all selling extraordinarily well and providing coast-to-coast TV exposure—is that earlier it might have cost him his job if not his career. For 28 years?

What first strikes even the casual reader is the peculiar format of this autobiographical fragment, a product of a three man collaboration. Part of the text provides a narrative context for the events of the assassination in the form of chronological sequence segments, another portion describes the medical events plus information on Crenshaw and his experiences given in his first person narrative, and yet another thematic element sews the two together in an interwoven interpretation of the murder and immediate events. Crenshaw supplied his part printed in one font. He puts forth in his own name in another font as the alleged factual assassination details what he got from Gary Shaw, a conspiracy theorist who never heard a theory he did not love and even adhered to contradictory theories at the same time, espousing

*Jens*

both. The writer, ~~Jeff~~ Hansen, a la Mary Shelley, stitched them all together and like her created a monster.

Crenshaw's Frankenstein of JFK assassination literature, a small pocket-books size, is a mere 205 pages of varying sizes of large type with an abundance of blank space as the fonts change. Errors strew the Shaw material, which must be read with much caution an ordinary reader could not possess and thus is doubly pernicious. Richard Nixon, for example, on several occasions has recounted where he was at the time of the shooting; it is not true to say he has not said. He was traveling in a taxi from La Guardia Airport in New York City to his city apartment. At a stoplight in Queens he heard the news.

Crenshaw story is weak and poor, certainly not enough to merit a "book," a brief article would have sufficed. A critical reader will also wonder where are the notes or other contemporary records he might have made and then referred to in his writing, most urgently needed when Crenshaw uses the mishmash of fancy, fiction and fact he got from Shaw. Conceivably, a person with a panged conscience and a great concern for truth and his minor role in history would have taken the time to set down his contemporary memories or save documents. But he did not. That he made no contemporaneous notes no doubt made it easier to write this book.

The one thing that can be said for such a book is that it is a first-person account of an expert's observations. This is what Crenshaw represents. Yet he says he saw what he could not have seen, the President with his shirt on. (p.78) In one of his numerous coast-to-coast TV appearances (ABC 20/20) he added

*I remember  
ed this  
incorrectly*

another impossibility, that he saw the bullet hole in the front of the President's neck was above the tie's knot.

In the official account of the assassination and indispensable in its single-bullet theory on which the official solution is based, a single bullet caused all seven non-fatal injuries the President and Governor John F. Connally suffered. This required that it be officially ordained that the slits in the front of the neckband of the shirt and the nick at the upper left-hand extremity of the knot, as worn by President Kennedy, were caused by this bullet of imputed magical properties like nothing in science or mythology.

Locating this anterior neck wound above the knot leaves the neckband slits and the nick of that knot unexplained.

*and  
the*  
From his own account and not from it alone Crenshaw did not see the shirt <sup>1</sup> in position on the President's body, as worn. He could not have, either.

Only one doctor in the entire world saw that, Dr. Charles Carrico, the only doctor in the trauma room when the gurney was rushed in. (3H361-62; Post Mortem, 358). Before any other doctor got there, under his direction, two emergency room nurses, Margaret M. Hencliffe and Diana Hamilton Bowron, in the usual emergency procedure, cut the tie off, leaving its knot nicked and, as Harold Weisberg sets forth in Post Mortem (357-58, 375-76), from Carrico's personal account to him, caused the two slits (that, incidentally, do not coincide) in the neckband. While they were doing this Carrico inserted a stethoscope to see if he could detect a heartbeat.

Dr. Malcolm Perry reached the trauma room before Crenshaw did, and was well at this futile work, as Crenshaw himself recounts, when the resident entered. Crenshaw's late-comer's function was to make one of the cut-downs on a leg through which the President was given fluids.

Supporting Carrico's testimony is that of Dr. Perry. He stated that before he entered the trauma room the clothing had been cut off by the nurses under Carrico's direction (3H377).

Crenshaw writes that the head wound and this one in the throat are both from the front. While this alone makes the official solution impossible because that mythology has Oswald firing all three shots from above and behind, it is not at all new in the responsible assassination literature, as distinguished from the theorized solutions.

What is of importance he does not state is his writing that on the next day, November 23, when Dr. Perry got to the hospital he looked exhausted. He explained this by saying he had been kept up most of the night by telephone calls from Bethesda pathologists who performed the autopsy. The official (corrupt) story has always been that only one phone call was placed to him in the morning of the 23d while the critics have consistently demonstrated that this could not possibly have been true. (See, Post Mortem, 37, 72, 77, 150, 199, 233, 259-60, 363, 508, 577.)

Crenshaw's remarks that men wearing suits with pistols were in the emergency rooms, but does not identify them. If they were not uniformed what else should they have worn? His account, confirmed by nobody else's of all the people in and around that

*at one point  
he says  
(secret  
service)  
suggested  
"his shirt  
was of the  
secret  
service."*

trauma room, is that they flaunted their pistols. It also makes no sense at all. There was no such need. If not the exaggeration or embroidering of his memory, it is his childish gilding of his imagined lily.

His recollection of being taken from the dying Oswald on the surgery table to receive a telephone call from President Johnson who ordered him to get a death-bed confession, does not ring true. In the first place, LBJ was too busy for any such detail that was better left to a subordinate with the time, patience and knowledge to follow through the bureaucracy to locate the wounded man, find the telephone number, place the call, and so forth. Where in the mass of details of the assassination over a nine month period do we find LBJ ever being interested in points about the murder? And, how would he know Oswald was dying? This was not self evident. If a confession was wanted LBJ would surely have utilized the professionals in the FBI or Secret Service already in Dallas and one in the police building when Oswald was shot, rather than rely on an unknown medical resident. LBJ would certainly not have known the name and asked for the most junior of the doctors working over Oswald, Crenshaw, Crenshaw's pointed statement. He would have wanted the man in charge, the senior surgeon.

Moreover, in Crenshaw's account, one of those "men in suits," also flaunting his weapon was already there, to take the confession LBJ allegedly demanded. This means that no purpose was served by the alleged phone call from LBJ. The man he allegedly had there, conspicuously armed, need only have said that LBJ sent him and reported LBJ's instruction.

*Crenshaw  
says one  
S. J. [unclear]  
but [unclear]  
would use  
more  
important  
data*

In addition, dispatching one to hear a confession violates all recognized practise. There are two so that there is corroboration. Crenshaw mentions only one.

All calls of all presidents are logged carefully and the logs are preserved. When Crenshaw's book appeared LBJ's logs were checked, as were the President's daily dairy and the Secret Service Detail Reports.

At 12:21 p.m. eastern standard time Ruby shot Oswald; Oswald died at 2:07. In those 106 minutes LBJ made no telephone calls and had no opportunity to make such a telephone call. Moreover, he got only one telephone call at 12:45 from Secretary of State Dean Rusk who had to interrupt an official function to connect with the President. President Johnson attended St. Marks Church, 3rd and A Street, SE, from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. From noon until 12:26 p.m. he had coffee with members of the congregation. At 12:35 pm, he, his wife, and associates arrived at the North Portico of the White House and they entered the Blue Room. At 12:45 Rusk phoned to inform him Oswald had been shot. Immediately LBJ informed Robert Kennedy; his anguish expressed at that time was for the negative opinion of America the world was receiving, not Oswald. LBJ made no phone call. In that somber, public occasion with the corpse of President Kennedy just feet away and major public figures surrounding him and absorbing his every faculty, the poignant, pressing, and serious affair of the solemn movement of the body to the Capitol transcended everything. He would not want to call Texas. Robert Kennedy went upstairs and returned at 11:55 with Jacqueline to meet President Johnson in the



Blue Room. At 1:06 LBJ joined others to accompany the body of President Kennedy from the White House to the Capitol. This public ceremony lasted until 2:15. LBJ could not have telephoned Texas. And, he did not.

Crenshaw undermines his own credibility by including in the book of which he is represented as the author giving an account of personal knowledge by including what he could not possibly know. Even if they were true, as often they were not. Thus he writes, for all the world as though he had been at Bethesda rather than in Dallas, that the President's body reached the Navy hospital in a cheap gray coffin, zipped in a body bag, when it had left Dallas in a bronze casket, wrapped in sheets resting on a plastic mattress cover. This is a conspiracy-theorists invention.

Voluminous and definitive evidence refutes this concoction. Two suffice. Two FBI agents, James W. Sibert and Francis X. O'Neill, were with the casket from the time Air Force One landed at Andrews Air Base in Washington. They helped remove the body from the casket at the hospital according to their report, available from the National Archives or the FBI and reprinted in facsimile in Post Mortem. They are explicit in stating that the casket is the one into which the body was placed in Dallas, a bronze casket (that is covered by receipts and other records because it had not been paid for). Additionally, from Parkland Memorial to the Navy Hospital the corpse was never, not even for one second, out of the physical control of the Secret Service and JFK loyalists; no opportunity existed to steal and switch the body; the documentary evidence is unimpeachable.

Crenshaw's consistent corruption of the evidence throughout the book as in the casket-switch fiction casts doubt on those portions of his account dealing with his Parkland experience.

Finally, Crenshaw is awash in patriotism as he describes the death of President Kennedy, dying while he helped try to save him. Thankfully his type of love of country--28 years later he tells what he says is the truth (when it won't cost him any money and adds nothing new and is tainted by errors)--is not characteristic of the American people. Rather theirs is more appropriately captured by a poignant phrase from the eloquent inaugural address of the battle tested 35th President:

"Don't ask what your country can do for you,  
ask what you can do for your country."