

Family Bars Exhuming of Connally

By SAM HOWE VERHOVEK

Special to The New York Times

HOUSTON, June 18 — The family of former Gov. John B. Connally today angrily rejected requests by F.B.I. officials and private researchers that his body be exhumed in a new search for evidence about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy 30 years ago.

Governor Connally was wounded while riding in a Dallas motorcade with Kennedy when the President was shot to death, and some researchers have suggested that bullet fragments that they say remain in Mr. Connally's body could show once and for all whether a second gun, and presumably a second marksman, might have been involved in the assassination.

But Mr. Connally's family said through a spokesman today that most, and probably all, bullet fragments that had lodged in him were removed soon after he was shot and that they clearly showed then, as various official inquiries have concluded, that they were from one of the two bullets that hit the President.

"Beyond that," said a statement issued by Julian O. Read, a friend of the family, Mr. Connally had been available for 30 years, before dying Tuesday here in Houston, "for any legitimate research request," and "in all that time no such request has been made by any responsible authority."

The statement said the family would "resist vigorously any efforts to disturb the body of John Connally."

Under state and Federal law, the body may not be exhumed without permission of the family or a court order.

Mr. Connally was buried Thursday in Austin, and by this afternoon ill feeling over the question of whether his body should be exhumed had clearly escalated. Some Kennedy assassination researchers suggested that a new cover-up of crucial evidence was under way, and officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation hoped for an exhumation to prove that this was not the case. Meanwhile, Mr. Connally's family was appalled that the observance of his death had been publicly overshadowed by the notion that his body should be unearthed just hours after he had been laid to rest.

The family also said it was offended that an official request for access to his body had come even as his funeral was under way.

"Obviously the way this thing cropped up yesterday, right in the middle of the funeral, was bizarre to say the least," said a family spokesman, George Christian, a former aide to Mr. Connally and to Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor as President. "The F.B.I. tried to reach the family through various sources right in the middle of the services. I can't believe it. They have no conception what this does to the family."

A spokeswoman for the Justice Department, the F.B.I.'s parent, said today that the department had received letters from two research groups before the funeral urging examination of the body and that officials had concluded that there was merit to the request.

"We then approached the family in what we hope was a sensitive way to ask what their wishes were," said the

spokeswoman, Caroline Aronovitz. Asked whether the Justice Department would like to have the body exhumed, she said, "Not if that is what the family does not wish."

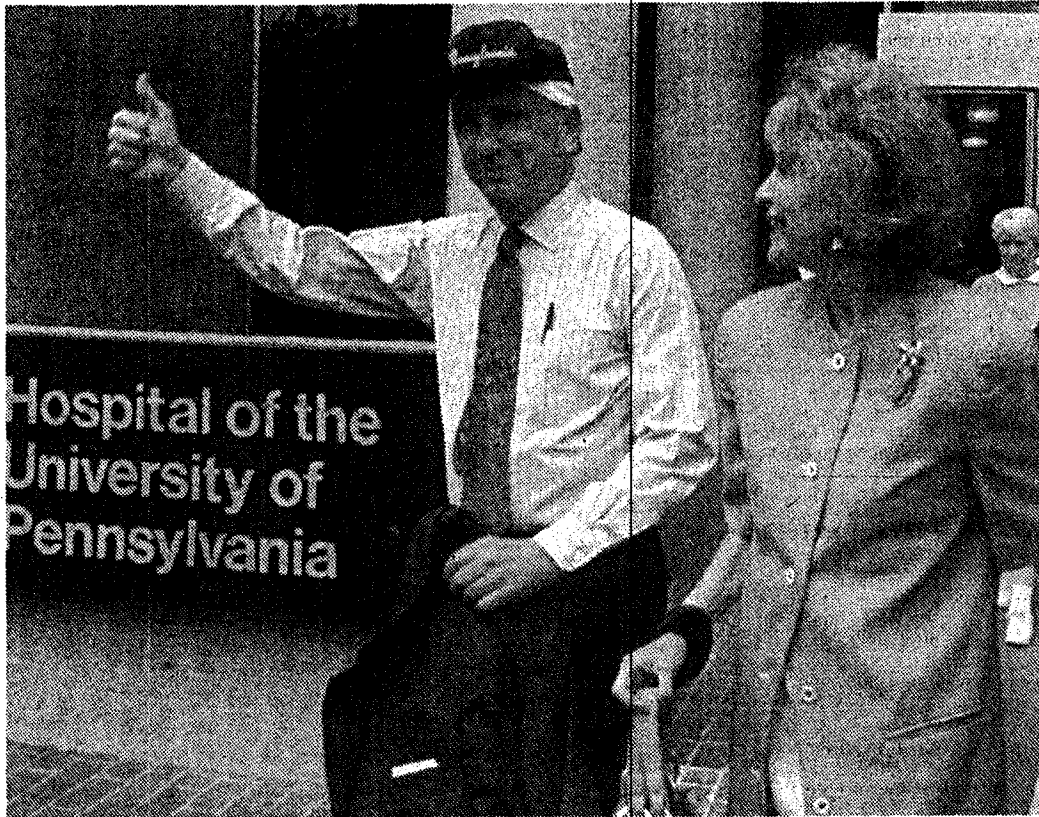
But the two research groups — the Assassination Archives and Research Center, based in Washington, and the J.F.K. Assassination Information Center, in Dallas — have pressed on with the request. And some F.B.I. officials said today that they were hoping for a change of heart on the part of the Connally family, because, they said, an exhumation might help to confirm official conclusions about the assassination.

The Warren Commission, appointed by President Johnson to investigate the assassination, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and fired three bullets at the Kennedy motorcade: one that missed; one that passed through the President, struck Mr. Connally in the back, exited through his chest, passed through his right wrist, entered his left thigh and later showed up, largely intact, on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital, and a third that shattered the President's skull, killing him.

Attacking the commission's findings about the second bullet, conspiracy theorists have ridiculed what has been termed the "magic bullet" conclusion. They say one bullet could not have traveled so tortuous a route and sustained such little damage.

For his part, Mr. Connally often said he believed that he and the President had been hit by separate bullets. But he rejected the notion that anybody other than Oswald had fired them.

NY Times
6-19-53



Reuters

Senator Specter Released After Surgery

Sporting a bandaged head, a black and blue eye and an optimistic thumbs up signal, Senator Arlen Specter left a Philadelphia hospital yesterday with

his wife, Joan. He had a benign tumor removed from his skull on Monday. Doctors expect that he will be fully recovered by the end of August.