

Dallas Doctor Says It's Time to End

BOOKS

Patricia Holt

JFK's Conspiracy of Silence
By Charles A. Crenshaw, with Jens Hansen and J. Gary Show

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After 30 years of silence, Charles A. Crenshaw, one of the doctors who treated both John F. Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald at Parkland Hospital in Dallas in 1963, has decided to tell the world why he believes the Warren Commission was wrong about its "single-bullet" theory.

All the doctors at Parkland, says Crenshaw, were told not to discuss the wounds or treatment of Kennedy and Oswald, nor were they allowed to confer with Oliver Stone in the making of the movie.

But now at 56, his "medical career over," Crenshaw believes he no longer has to "fear the men in suits" (Secret Service and FBI agents) nor the criticism of my peers. Having endured "threats (and) intimidation" and witnessed "falsification and destruction of evidence," Crenshaw says he realized after years of personal torment that "my silence has protected ... a handful of cowards (who have) callously and maliciously circumvented" the Constitution.

Weeping Nurse

Crenshaw, who will appear on the ABC news show "20/20" tonight (Channel 7 at 10 o'clock), was a third-year resident and veteran of hundreds of gunshot wound traumas by the time he raced to the emergency room to join the team working on Kennedy. "As we flew by the nurses' station, I yelled, 'Which room?' A nurse with tears streaming down her face raised one finger.

"I looked to my left and saw a man in a suit running. To my amazement, another man in a suit

Silence on JFK

jumped into his path and smashed a Thompson submachine gun across his chest and face (breaking his jaw) ... I was to learn later that the man with the gun was a Secret Service Agent, and the one who had been hit was an FBI agent. It was a goddamn madhouse in the emergency room ... people running, yelling. Everyone suspected everyone else ... complete and utter paranoia."

Crenshaw describes the many procedures used on Kennedy, even though doctors believed he was dead on arrival. The professionalism and speed of the Dallas team is later contrasted with the "critical errors" and sloppy procedure of the doctors (none of whom were forensic pathologists) performing the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. Yet, as Crenshaw points out, the Parkland surgeons were characterized by the Eastern establishment as a "group of ragtag, country doctors" who couldn't give "the President superlative health care."

'There Was No Doubt'

Who would have believed Crenshaw, not even a real doctor yet, for showing exactly how and why, as he does here, "there was no doubt" that JFK was shot not from the back by one "magic bullet" but from the front (the grassy knoll) by two bullets, one entering the neck and the other the right side of his head? Thanks to his impeccable descriptions in this book, we believe him now.

Crenshaw further adds that although he personally supervised

the placement of Kennedy's body in a casket at Parkland, it arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital "zipped in a gray body bag inside a different coffin." The condition of Kennedy's cranium "had substantially changed during a period of six hours and over a distance of 1,500 miles. Great effort had been made to reconstruct the back of the President's head, and the tracheotomy (an incision at the front of the throat) had been enlarged and mangled. No doubt, someone had gone to a great deal of trouble to show a different story

than we had seen at Parkland."

Crenshaw's third shocking revelation is that during the rushed and intense surgery he and other doctors performed on Lee Harvey Oswald, a stranger who "resembled Oliver Hardy in a scrub suit with no mask" somehow got into the room. Stepping back from the operating table to "get a cap and mask on the son of a bitch before he contaminated the entire room with bacteria," Crenshaw says he was called to the phone.

The caller, he says, was Pres-

ident Lyndon Johnson, who thundered, "I want a death-bed confession from the accused assassin. There's a man in the operating room who will take the statement." But Oswald died moments later, leaving Crenshaw to wonder why Johnson so quickly assumed Oswald was the killer and would confess. He also asks, "Why would a President with the immediate and monumental task of taking over the United States government involve himself in a matter that should have been routinely handled by the law-enforcement

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BY ASSOCIATED PRESS
Charles Crenshaw: He disputes 'single bullet' theory

agencies:

That question and dozens of others are answered by J. Gary Shaw, a longtime conspiracy theorist who originally convinced Crenshaw to write this book. With Jens Hansen, Shaw weaves a moment-by-moment chronology of events — an almost exact parallel of the Jim Garrison story as told in "JFK" — with Crenshaw's personal experience. The result, though sometimes melodramatic, is both headline- and history-making. And the question remains: What about the other doctors?