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Determined to be Administrative Marking

April 23, 1964

Date see By 4/6/78
Personal and Confidential

Memo to: Honorable Gerald R. Ford

Subject: Some cursory observations on the testimony re the medical management of President Kennedy.

I did not have time to review in detail the testimony. Certain impressions came to mind.

1. There was nothing that could have been done in any way that would have saved the life of the late President. He received adequate and complete care under the existing circumstances.

2. An outstanding omission in the testimony is the whereabouts of the President's personal physician, Dr. Barkley. He was mentioned as being present once, but none of the doctors made a statement that he had given them any medical background pertaining to the President's personal health.

It seems strange to me that if he were present, the man who had complete knowledge of President Kennedy's health and had the responsibility for maintenance of this health, he was not referred to as having given such information to the attending physicians.

A decision to give 300 mgms of cortisone was wisely made, but only on the hearsay knowledge of the attending physician. This could have been a prime requisite for the President's recovery if he had been less grievously wounded.

Apparently his back brace was a discovery of the attending physician, and not knowledge given to them by anyone close to the President.

3. The chain of command in the emergency room was apparently according to hospital protocol, but under the strain of the importance of the patient and the confusion of people milling around could have seriously hampered the proper care if the President had been wounded less seriously.

It would seem to me that we could learn from such an experience and make sure that all superfluous personnel except attending medical staff, and family, are removed from the immediate scene.

Copy of material at the Gerald R. Ford Library

Honorable Gerald R. Ford

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4. The mixup on the stretchers was not clear to me, but it seemed incredible that the President ended up on the stretcher of Governor Connally.

5. The behavior of press or alleged press and secret service in questioning the physicians seemed to lack a sensible or orderly process. There seemed to be some harassment of individuals involved in the management of the patient that was not clearly defined.

The tracking down of the physician who was in isolation by a UPI reporter must have been either sharp reporting ability or information given by individuals close to the security of the situation.

These are only rough impressions which I would like to reconsider after reviewing again the testimony. I should be happy to do that after the Primary, April 28th.

We are proud that you are representing all of us on the Commission, and I thank you personally for your consideration of me on this and other matters.

Sincerely yours,


James D. Weaver, M.C.