

PABLO NERUDA TWO POEMS

THE
NATION

JULY 11, 1966 35 cents

What the Warren Report Omits
THE VITAL DOCUMENTS

JACOB COHEN

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

A Report From Occupied Territory

JAMES BALDWIN

PEN CONGRESS

Pablo Neruda in New York

JOSE YGLESIAS

The View from the East

IVAN BOLDIZSAR

ER NEWSPAPER NE

7-17-67 PLE1955
MRS HUBERT LECKIE
1814 INGLESDIE TERR N W
WASHINGTON D C 20010

Here is Wallace Baker's mother speaking, describing the night that a police officer came to her house to collect the evidence which he hoped would prove that her son was guilty of murder. The late Mrs. Sugar had run a used-clothing store and the policeman was looking for old coats. "Nasty as he was that night in my house. He didn't ring the bell. So I said, have you got a search warrant? He say, no, I don't have no search warrant and I'm going to search anyway. Well, he did. So I said, will you please step out of this room till I get dressed? He wouldn't leave." This collector of evidence against the boys was later arrested on charges of possessing and passing counterfeit money (he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor, "conspiring" to pass counterfeit money). The officer's home in Hartsdale, N. Y., is valued at \$35,000, he owns two cars, one a Cadillac, and when he was arrested, had \$1,300 in his pockets. But the families of The Harlem Six do not have enough money for counsel. The court appointed counsel, and refused to allow the boys counsel of their own choice, even though the boys made it clear that they had no confidence in their court-appointed counsel, and even though four leading civil rights lawyers had asked to be allowed to handle the case. The boys were convicted of first-degree murder, and are now ending their childhood and may end their lives in jail.

These things happen, in all our Harlems, every single day. If we ignore this fact, and our common responsibility to change this fact, we are sealing our doom. Here is the boy, Daniel Hamm, speaking—speaking of his country, which has sworn to bring peace and freedom to so many millions: "They don't want us here. They don't want us—period! All they want us to do is work on these penny-ante jobs for them—and that's *it*. And beat our heads in whenever they feel like it. They don't want us on the street 'cause the World's Fair is coming. And they figure that all black people are hoodlums anyway, or bums, with no character of our own. So they put us off the streets, so their friends

from Europe, Paris or Vietnam—wherever they come from—can come and see this supposed-to-be great city."

There is a very bitter prescience in what this boy—this "bad nigger"—is saying, and he was not born knowing it. We taught it to him in seventeen years. He is draft age now, and if he were not in jail, would very probably be on his way to Southeast Asia. Many of his contemporaries are there, and the American Government and the American press are extremely proud of them. They are dying there like flies; they are dying in the streets of all our Harlems far more hideously than flies. A member of my family said to me when we learned of the bombing of the four little girls in the Birmingham Sunday school, "Well, they don't need us for work no more. Where are they building the gas ovens?" Many Negroes feel this; there is no way not to feel it. Alas, we know our countrymen, municipalities, judges, politicians, policemen and draft boards very well. There is more than one way to skin a cat, and more than one way to get bad niggers off the streets. No one in Harlem will ever believe that The Harlem Six are guilty—God knows their guilt has certainly not been proved. Harlem knows, though, that they have been abused and possibly destroyed, and Harlem knows why—we have lived with it since our eyes opened on the world. One is in the impossible position of being unable to believe a word one's countrymen say. "I can't believe what you say," the song goes, "because I see what you do"—and one is also under the necessity of escaping the jungle of one's situation into any other jungle whatever. It is the bitterest possible comment on our situation now that the suspicion is alive in so many breasts that America has at last found a way of dealing with the Negro problem. "They don't want us—period!" The meek shall inherit the earth, it is said. This presents a very bleak image to those who live in occupied territory. The meek Southeast Asians, those who remain, shall have their free elections, and the meek American Negroes—those who survive—shall enter the Great Society.

WHAT THE WARREN REPORT OMITTS

THE VITAL DOCUMENTS

JACOB COHEN

Mr. Cohen taught history at Yale and is teaching this summer at Brandeis. He is presently completing a book on the Kennedy assassination which defends the Warren Commission's principal conclusion that Oswald was the lone killer. His articles have appeared in many magazines including The Nation, Commonweal and The New Leader.

Several writers have recently suggested that Lee Harvey Oswald was not a lone assassin shooting at President Kennedy that black Friday in Dallas and publishers' fall lists promise several new books developing variations of the same theory. While the writers we have heard thus far differ on such crucial details as the number of shots, the timing and source of the shots, and the precise location of the hits, there is one point upon which all present and, I

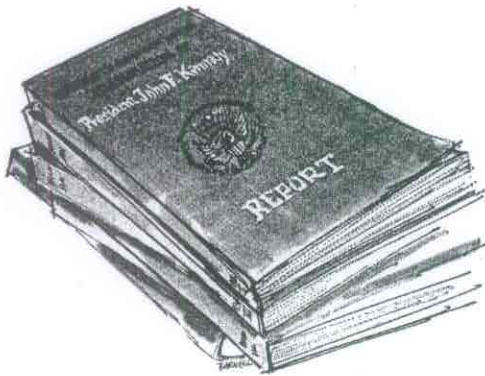
would guess, future devotees of the theory could be made to agree: if there was more than one assassin, then the results of the autopsy which was performed on the President at Bethesda the night of the assassination must have been deliberately falsified.

One can reach no other conclusion. Two experienced pathologists and a wound ballistics expert examined President Kennedy thoroughly, internally and externally; and the physical damage described in their autopsy report, submitted, we are told,* on November 24, 1963, two days after the assassination, perfectly sustains the ultimate conclusions of the commission: that two bullets hit the President, both fired from a point "behind and somewhat above the level

*The autopsy document (Exhibit No. 387) is undated. We learn the date it was submitted in the testimony of the examining doctors (II pp. 349 et seq.).

of the deceased"; that one bullet hit him in the back at the base of his neck, exiting from the lower third of the throat; and that the other bullet, the fatal missile, entered in the back of the skull and exited from the right temple, "carrying with it portions of cerebrum, skull and scalp."

Let us suppose, then, that the wound in Kennedy's throat was a wound of entry, which would place another assassin somewhere in front of him. This is one of the notions developed by Vincent Salandria in his articles in *Liberation*. Now, obviously, such a bullet would have to go somewhere. Either it would have lodged in Kennedy's body, in which case it would have been seen in the X rays and removed by surgery, or, it would have exited from the body at some discernible point. Internally, the bullet would have left a path and a pattern of bruises, rips, abrasions, blood clotting, displaced tissue, probably broken bones, and metallic tracings which could not have failed to indicate the



bullet's source. But there is not a scintilla of evidence in the autopsy which would indicate a hit from the front. If there was such a hit, the autopsy must be false.

Or suppose that the President was hit flush in the right temple by an assassin situated to his right on the grassy knoll, as Salandria and Fred Cook suggest. This means that the massive fault in Kennedy's temple, which was observed in horror by many eyewitnesses to the shooting, was an entry wound; Salandria suggests the use of dum dum bullets to explain how an entry wound could have had such a shattering effect. However, the autopsy says that Kennedy's temple was shattered by a bullet which entered the base of his skull, leaving a neat, round hole, and then blasted out of his temple. Descriptions of the beveling and splintering of bone and the displacement of brain matter confirm this interpretation, as would the many pictures and X rays taken just before and during the autopsy examination. Again, it is inconceivable that a bullet—even a dum dum bullet—fired from the right, entering the right temple, could have caused damage even remotely resembling that caused by a bullet fired from above and behind which exited from the temple. If Cook and Salandria's speculations are correct, the autopsy is phony.

Or consider the theories of Edward Jay Epstein, who is described in Richard Rovere's adulatory introduction to Epstein's recent book, *Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth* (Viking): "Mr. Epstein,"

says Rovere, "does not challenge or even question the fundamental integrity of the Commission or its staff. He discards as shabby 'demonology' the view that the Commissioners collusively suppressed evidence." However, when one extracts the theory behind Epstein's line of questioning it is clear that Epstein, no less than the others, suggests that the autopsy was falsified and, I might add, the evidence of this collusively suppressed.

The pivotal point in the commission's case for a single assassin—Epstein and Cook would agree—is its contention that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were hit by the same bullet. According to the commission the bullet which hit the President in the back of the neck and exited from the throat went on to hit Connally and caused all his wounds. If this did not happen—if Kennedy and Connally were hit by separate bullets—then it follows that there was a second assassin, as Epstein and Cook's very similar analyses of the films of the assassination indubitably prove. Both Epstein and Cook believe that the bullet which hit Kennedy in the back hit too low to have exited from his throat and then hit Connally. Cook agrees that the bullet exited from the throat, but feels its line of flight was too flat to have hit Connally at the required downward angle. Epstein doesn't even believe that the bullet exited from Kennedy's throat; he suggests that it penetrated the back an inch or so and then fell out.

Now either the bullet hit high enough on the back to have done what is claimed for it, or it did not; this is a matter of observable, measurable fact. Epstein suggests a wound several inches below the one described in the autopsy. If he is right, the autopsy must have been falsified; doctors, like successful assassins, don't miss by that margin. Similarly, is it a matter of observable fact whether that bullet exited from the throat or not? Dr. Milton Helpert, chief medical examiner of New York City, points out that "there is no such thing as a rifle bullet's passing through a neck without leaving a path." Mr. Epstein says there was no path (op. cit., pp. 58-9). Cook, too, says the pathologists at Bethesda were "unable to . . . trace the actual path of the bullet." But the autopsy report describes the path in some detail:

The second wound presumably of entry is that described above in the upper right posterior thorax. Beneath the skin there is ecchymosis of subcutaneous tissue and musculature. The missile path through the fascia and musculature cannot be easily probed. The wound presumably of exit was that described by Dr. Malcolm Perry of Dallas in the low anterior cervical region. When observed by Dr. Perry the wound measured "a few millimeters in diameter," however it was extended as a tracheotomy incision and thus its character is distorted at the time of the autopsy. However, there is considerable ecchymosis of the strap muscle of the right side of the neck and of the fascia about the trachea adjacent to the line of the tracheotomy wound. The third point of reference in connecting these two wounds is in the apex (supra-clavicular portion) of the right pleural cavity. In this region there is contusion of the parietal pleura and of the extreme apical portion of the right upper lobe of the lung. In both instances the diameter of contusion and ecchymosis at the point of maximal involvement measures 5 cm. Both the visceral and parietal pleura are intact overlying these areas of trauma.

The emphasis is suggested by Dr. Helpern who interpreted this passage for me and assured me that this is a proper description of a path through the neck. Dr. Helpern also expressed considerable irritation that Mr. Epstein had quoted him in connection with Epstein's view that no path was found. When I asked Helpern what was meant by the statement "the missile path . . . cannot easily be probed" he snapped, "Nobody said it was always easy to find a path."

In other words, the President's body provided the most effective disproof of any contention that there were other hits, other assassins, and anyone making such an imputation, therefore, must be willing to defend the thesis that the autopsy doctors deliberately falsified their report, or that the autopsy report reproduced in the Warren Commission Report is a forgery, or both. Such a charge, of course, challenges the good name of many people, including those who lied, those who ordered them to lie, and the many who would know about the deception and are remaining silent.

Has it come to this, then—the doctors' word against the word of Cook, Epstein, Salandria, et al.? There is, of course, eyewitness testimony and other corroborative evidence on the nature of the wounds, but an objective mind would, it seems to me, find this evidence contradictory. Taking from these contradictions only the evidence which does not confirm the official version, critics easily can convince their readers that the Warren Report is radically flawed. And, sadly, the authors of the report have also been rather selective in their interpretation of the evidence. Whom are we to believe?

Fortunately there is an easy way out of this predicament, for there exists material evidence—the photographs and X rays taken at Bethesda—which could settle almost all the major differences of opinion concerning the wounds. The photographs would pinpoint the location of the back wound, and by showing whether it was high enough to sustain the commission's theory, would either silence Cook and Epstein or win a Pulitzer Prize for one of them. The photographs could also show alleged wounds unaccounted for in the autopsy, such as the exit wound of a bullet entering the throat, and they would reveal details of the complex wound in Kennedy's temple. And the X rays would determine, once and forever, if any unaccounted for bullets or bullet fragments lodged in Kennedy's body. Bullets are as clear in an X ray as a spoon and, together with the photographs, would depict the fracturing in Kennedy's skull clearly enough to test Salandria's theory that the massive skull wound was a wound of entry. Indeed, one sentence in the autopsy report makes the point perfectly:

The complexity of these fractures and the fragments thus produced tax satisfactory verbal description and are better appreciated in photographs and roentgenograms which are prepared.

By showing nothing more than the autopsy has led us to expect, these documents would be valuable for they would silence a hundred theories already born or *in utero*.

All of which leads us to an examination of what may be the most exasperating mystery surrounding the Warren Report, that of the missing X rays and photographs. For amazing as it may seem, these documents—the only material evidence that could confirm or deny the observa-

tions of the autopsy doctors—are not included among the exhibits in the twenty-six-volume Warren Report, and as far as one can ascertain, were never even examined by the Warren Commission and its staff. Indeed, after several months of part-time detective work, I cannot even be sure of the whereabouts of these documents.

This much may be learned from the public record: In the half hour before the autopsy examination some "15-20 photographs both black and white and color" were taken, "depicting significant findings." Also, "10-12 X-rays" were made at this time, and "perhaps 15-20 more X-rays were made during the autopsy." I quote from the testimony (II, 348 et seq.) of Dr. J. J. Humes, the chief autopsy surgeon, who went on to say to the Warren Commission that these films were used "extensively" during the autopsy examination. Soon after the autopsy was concluded, all films were turned over to Agent Roy H. Kellerman of the Secret Service by Humes's superior, Captain J. H. Stover, Jr., and Kellerman then brought them to the White House where he turned them over to Special Agent Robert Bouck.** What the Secret Service did with these documents is, as we shall see, part of the mystery.

On December 6, 1963, Captain (then Commander) Humes submitted a "Supplementary Autopsy Report" (Exhibit No. 391) to Captain Stover containing the results of microscopic examination of Kennedy's brain, heart and sections of the abdominal organs. In this report Humes writes:

During the course of this examination seven (7) black and white and six (6) color 4x5 negatives are [sic] exposed but not developed (the cassettes containing these negatives have been delivered by hand to Rear Admiral George W. Burkley, MC, USN, White House Physician).

We are not told whether the thirteen photographs mentioned here were taken in the laboratory, or are the same ones which were taken and exposed in the morgue at Bethesda on the night of the assassination. If they were taken in the laboratory, there are twenty-eight to thirty-three photographs extant, and twenty-five to thirty-two X rays. If they were taken the night of the assassination, the missing photographs number from fifteen to twenty.

Dr. Humes appeared before the commission on March 16, 1964. He quickly explained that before testifying he "did not know whether or not the photographs which we made would be available to the Commission," and that, therefore, he had asked a Navy artist to prepare drawings of the President's wounds. These drawings (Commission Exhibits 385-389), the only visualization of the wounds in the entire twenty-six volumes, were made, Humes testified, solely on the basis of his, and his colleague, Dr. J. Thornton Boswell's, *verbal* description of the location and nature of the wounds. Humes and Boswell worked from notes; they did not have the pictures and X rays before them as they told the artist what to draw. Humes concedes the awkwardness of this procedure, repeating several times that these drawings are only a "schematic representation" and admitting once that "the photographs would be more accurate as to the precise location [of the wounds]," but then he insists, unconvincingly, that the pictures and X rays

**Secret Service Report to the Warren Commission, December 18, 1963, Volume II, Exhibit 12. This material is in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

would be of no particular help to the commissioners. Since, as we have seen, inches count very precisely for the commission's thesis of a single assassin, it is difficult to understand why the commissioners did not examine the photos.

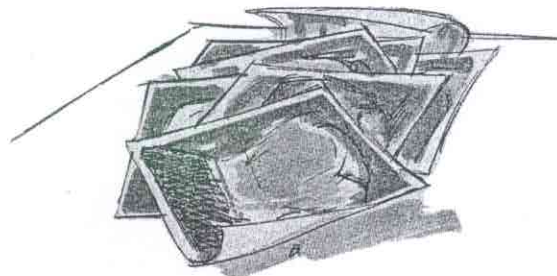
What did Humes mean when he said that he didn't know whether these documents "would be available" to the commission? At one point in his testimony he informed the commissioners that some of the X rays taken *during* the autopsy, as distinguished from the X rays taken *before* the autopsy, would be "available" if requested, strongly suggesting that the other X rays would not be "available." Who, we wonder, was telling Humes just what documents would or would not be "available" to the commission? The best guess is someone from the Secret Service, since that agency presumably possessed these documents at this time. Nor is it clear whether the commission ever requested and received the X rays which were available, though in a lengthy interview on June 13, 1966, Arlen Specter of the commission staff told me that he had not seen any of these documents, and that when he asked Justice Warren for them Warren said that the commission had decided "not to press the matter." Since Mr. Specter, who is now District Attorney of Philadelphia, single-handedly developed the evidence on the autopsy and wrote the first draft of the most widely controverted pages in the Warren Report, his comment on this crucial point may be significant. Of course, his memory may be inaccurate. His reputation is certainly in some jeopardy as a result of accusations made lately, particularly by Epstein. However, this much seems clear from the public record: the Warren Commission did not see all of the X rays, or any of the important photographs.

Surprised by the revelations in Humes's testimony I began to check through the Warren Report to see if anyone else who should have seen these documents actually did see them. For example, on April 27, 1964, three wound ballistics experts from the Army's Edgewood Arsenal conducted experiments relating to the President's wounds. From animal skin, animal meat and gelatins they simulated several inert human necks and skulls, and then, under conditions roughly equivalent to those which prevailed at the time of the assassination, using Oswald's rifle, they fired round after round into the dummies in order to compare the damage done to the simulated necks and skulls with the damage that had actually been done to the President. They also simulated Governor Connally's rib cage for comparison with his wounds. Unquestionably, these scientists needed the photos and X rays of the President in order to make precise comparisons, just as they needed the Connally X rays. (No photographs were taken of Connally.) They received medical reports on Connally, the Connally X rays and the Kennedy autopsy, but not Kennedy's X rays and photos (I, p. 581).

Nor had the commission's principal ballistics expert, FBI scientist Robert Frazier, seen the X rays or even the autopsy before testifying on May 13, 1964. Asked whether the bullet holes in the front and back of Kennedy's shirt were made by the same bullet, Frazier refused to comment because, he said, he had not yet seen the autopsy results (V, p. 71). On June 4, 1964, Frazier testified again. He had been to Dallas on May 23 and had conducted an experi-

ment for the commission which reconstructed the circumstances of the assassination. It was mainly from this that the commission concluded that a bullet exiting from Kennedy's throat, at the angle indicated by autopsy findings, would necessarily have hit Connally, considering the position of the two men at the time of the shooting. But this was not Frazier's conclusion. He withheld final judgment because he still had not seen the autopsy or other evidence on the wounds which would have indicated exactly what the downward angle of the bullet was (V, p. 168).

The fact that Frazier, the FBI's leading ballistics expert, had not seen the X rays and photos, or even the autopsy, by June, 1964, strongly suggests that the FBI did not have these documents as it prepared its own report on the assassination, presented to President Johnson on December 9, 1963, less than three weeks after the assassination. The point is crucial, because, as Salandria and Epstein have stressed, the FBI report contradicts the autopsy in the Warren Report in several details. According to the FBI, Kennedy was hit in the back, not the lower neck, and this bullet did not exit from his throat. The throat wound, says the FBI, was caused by a sliver of the bullet which hit Kennedy's skull. Now, if the FBI had the autopsy when it made this report,



the conclusion must follow that the autopsy findings have somehow changed since the time the FBI examined them. Epstein states categorically that the "autopsy report was forwarded to the FBI" before it submitted its report on December 9, 1963. He adds that the "FBI had color photographs of the autopsy." But his only citation for these statements is an interview with Francis W. H. Adams of the commission staff. When I called Mr. Adams to check, he told me that he did not remember talking to Epstein, did not have Epstein's name in his calendar for July 8, 1965, the date Epstein claims the interview took place and, most important, that he had no knowledge whatsoever of whether or not the FBI had seen the autopsy and photographs. Unless Epstein can produce firmer documentation for his statement, we must add the authors of the FBI report to the list of people who should have seen the X rays and photos and did not.

Add the authors of the report of the Dallas police to that list also. Much abuse has been directed at the Dallas police for its handling of the case in the days just after the assassination, all of it deserved. It should be said, however, that the Dallas police continued its own separate investigation of the case for several weeks after the assassination, and the report it sent to the Warren Commission (XXIV, pp. 195-404) is well organized and admirably detailed. This

report must have been considerably more useful to the commission than the brief and largely rhetorical FBI report of December 9. Within three days of the assassination the Dallas police had received from the FBI laboratory reports on all bullets and bullet fragments, Oswald's rifle and pistol, finger and palm prints; by December 20, they had an analysis of the Zapruder films of the assassination prepared by the FBI, which had received the films on December 5 (XXV, p. 576). And yet the Dallas police apparently never saw a copy of the autopsy report or of the photographs and X rays.

Where are these documents today? They are not in the National Archives, which supposedly has all the materials on the assassination. On March 31, 1966, I spent a day with John F. Simmons and Marion Johnson of the archives staff working through a long list of all the items in the assassination collection. Mr. Johnson said he had handled every item on the assassination in the building—classified, declassified and unclassified—and was sure that he had not seen the Kennedy X rays and photos, though he did remember photographs of Oswald's body. We also checked through all correspondence between the Secret Service and the commission and found no mention of these documents. The people at the archives, who were clearly irked that such important material is missing from the collection, suggested that I get in touch with the Secret Service.

So I wrote to Robert Wallace, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, who forwarded my letter to David C. Acheson. In a tart note Mr. Acheson informed me that the Service had turned all of its material over to the commission or the archives and that the "X-ray films were made available to the Commission and were in fact used in briefing the Commission staff on the autopsy procedures and results." He said nothing about the photos. I responded, politely, that the X rays were not in the archives despite the fact that the commission had turned over all its material to that library. I asked specifically how and when the Secret Service disposed of these documents, and I asked *who* exactly had "used the X rays in briefing the commission staff on the autopsy procedure and results," since it was clear from their testimony that the doctors who performed the autopsy had not seen the X rays since the night of the assassination. I also asked again about the photographs. This letter, dated April 26, 1966, is unanswered. When I wrote it I had not yet interviewed Specter, who told me the X rays had been unavailable.

And I wrote Dr. Humes, requesting clarification on several points and asking whether he knew where the photos and X rays were. He offered a terse no-comment. I wrote to Admiral Burkley, to whom Humes sent thirteen photographs, along with his supplementary autopsy, asking what he did with these photos and whether he knew where the photos and X rays were. He did not answer.

And I wrote a still unanswered letter to Sen. Robert Kennedy on May 5, 1966. Several of the lawyers on the commission staff whom I interviewed had told me they had heard that the photographs and possibly the X rays were not published at Robert Kennedy's request. The request is not in the record. Nor does the record indicate why the commission acceded to the request, if it was made, and why,

if Kennedy merely opposed publication, the commission itself and the doctors and scientists who worked with the commission and the FBI were not permitted access to these documents. One can understand why the Kennedy family would not wish the photographs of the dead President widely reprinted, but why they would object to the publication, or even the examination, of X rays, which are as impersonal as IBM cards, is puzzling. I asked the Senator four questions:

(1) A member of the commission staff told me he had heard that you requested that the photographs not be included among the published exhibits. Did you also request that the X rays not be made public?

(2) When did you make this request, and are you willing that your request be made part of the public record?

(3) Was it also in consequence of your wishes that the commission and its staff apparently did not have these documents available for study?

(4) I understand perfectly your desire not to make a spectacle of President Kennedy by making the photographs generally available. But isn't there some way that responsible scholars can be permitted to examine them in order to silence what promises to be—if the assassination of Lincoln is any example—a century of harmful accusations?

Mr. Kennedy, of course, has been out of the country. It is hoped that with the publication of this article he will comment publicly on some of these matters.

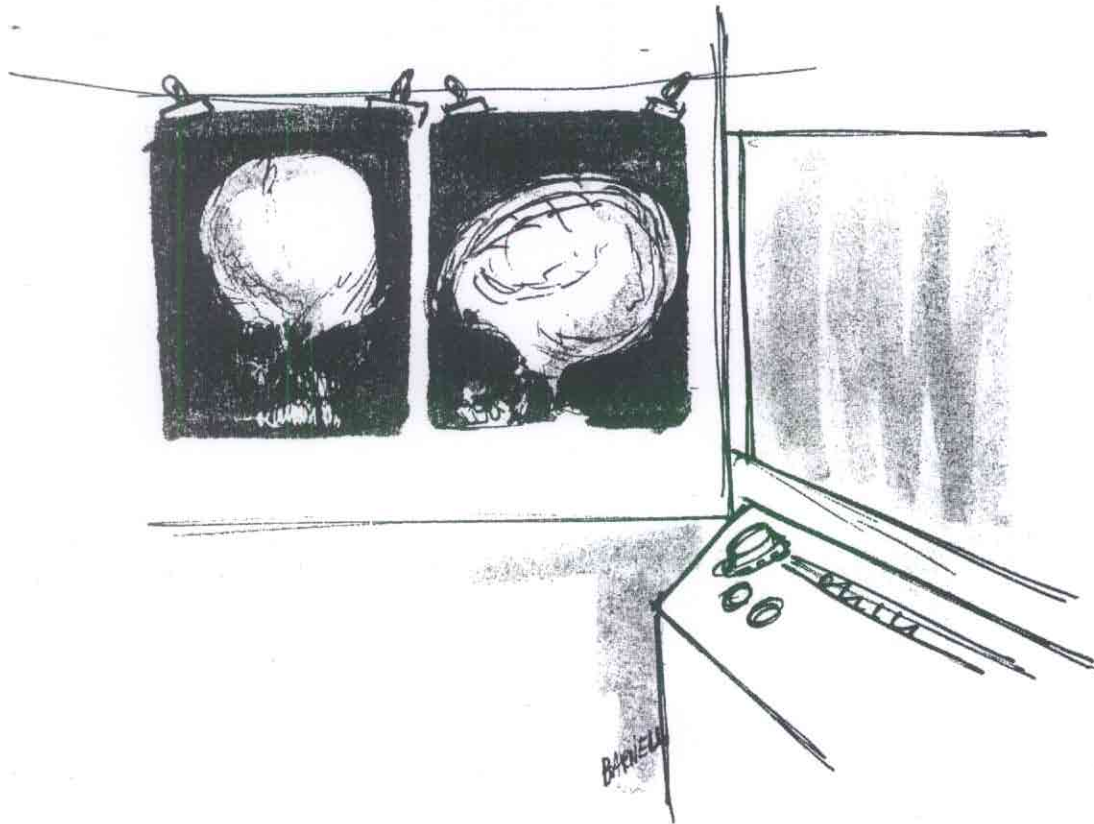
Why the secrecy?

Sometimes it all seems like a weird joke. Here are twenty-six volumes on the assassination of the President, displaying a penchant for infinite detail which extends even to an exhibit showing a strand of Oswald's pubic hair. And yet, perhaps by some innocent oversight, the X rays and photos of the murdered President, the only material evidence on his wounds, the only hard and fast confirmation of the autopsy results, are somehow missing (though the X rays of Connally are published in the report, exhibit 681). Here is a report which explicitly tries to answer troublesome critics, taking great pains, for example, to demolish almost every individual point raised by Mark Lane during the time he was defending Oswald in theatres and lecture halls all over the world. And, yet, the one set of documents which could disarm the speculations of its most serious critics has seemingly disappeared.

There is, of course, the sinister explanation that the autopsy is false, as the appearance of the X rays and photos would demonstrate. If so, there can be little question that there was a second assassin; that the commission covered this up and either helped in or silently observed the fabrication of evidence which would point to Lee Harvey Oswald as the sole assassin. The exposure of such a conspiracy could not fail to discredit the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, the District Attorney of Philadelphia, and many, many other prominent people. I believe it would cause a major political crisis in this country.

Is there an innocent explanation? Let me suggest one in which government officials act like government officials and the Kennedy family acts like the Kennedy family, emphasizing that what follows is only a theory, to be proved or disproved by the publication of the pictures and X rays and an explanation of where they have been.

It is now fairly well known that President Kennedy suf-



ferred from Addison's disease or adrenal insufficiency. Theodore Sorenson is quite frank about that in his biography, *Kennedy* (Harper & Row). Explaining why Kennedy was so near death after his back operation in 1954, Sorenson writes: "The chief cause of his hospitalization and discomfort was his back; but the cause of his near death in the fall of 1954 was the shock of a spinal operation upon his inadequate adrenal system. . . . The effect of surgery on his adrenal shortage caused, as he had been told might happen, severe postoperative complications. Twice the last rites of the church were administered. Twice he fought his way back to life, as he had once before in the Pacific." As Sorenson makes clear, the development of adrenal hormones, in the last decade and a half, has almost completely eliminated the debilitating and eventually fatal effects which Addison's disease once visited upon sufferers. With "simple medication by mouth," as Kennedy liked to describe the dose of cortisone type drugs he took daily, the disease can be fully controlled, much as diabetes can now be controlled. So there is nothing about the disease to keep a man from being President. As Dr. Milton Helpert said to me: "I don't know if Kennedy had Addison's disease, but if he did, I think it would be a marvelous thing if sufferers knew that this unmistakably vigorous man, who was our President, also suffered from the ailment."

Still, the malady was a political embarrassment, and the Kennedys took pains to cover it up, or at least to avoid the public use of the ominous term, "Addison's disease." Though

Sorenson is candid on the subject, a recent television series on Kennedy mentioned that the back operation in 1954 brought him to the edge of life, but failed to indicate why a back operation should have caused such peril. Occasionally rumors about Kennedy's health take a nasty turn, as when Rep. Walter Judd (a physician) commented disparagingly forty-eight hours before the election in 1960, on the "physical and mental health" of Addisonians. Or, as when Oswald's mother told writer Jean Stafford that her son may have been a mercy killer hired to put a President dying of "Atkinson's disease" out of his misery.

Conceivably, then, to avert low-minded speculation that Kennedy was a dying man when he was shot; to avert, in other words, on the occasion of his death, the kind of speculation about his health that he had tried to discourage during his life, Kennedy's family requested that several of the autopsy findings be kept a private matter. Such a request would explain a curious omission in the autopsy which has not yet received public comment: that the report contains no description of the adrenal glands. Nor is there any mention of the adrenal glands in the Supplementary Autopsy Report of December 6, 1963, though that report does contain the results of microscopic examination of the brain, heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys. The omission of any mention of the adrenal glands in the post-mortem examination of a man with Addison's disease is incredible, according to Dr. Helpert and several other doctors. It is

even possible (and this is my speculation, not that of the doctors) that the first bullet which passed harmlessly through Kennedy's neck would have caused a fatal adrenal crisis even if he had not been struck, fatally, in the head. Such a possibility must have been a matter of conjecture among the autopsy doctors, though the medical record does not reflect it.

As for the X rays: Dr. Austin J. McSweeney of the University of Wisconsin Medical School writes that in cases of "chronic adrenal insufficiency . . . an X ray of the abdomen may show calcium in the adrenal glands." When I pressed a radiologist, Dr. Sanford Bluestein, with my layman's questions, he estimated that X rays show calcium in about 40 per cent of the cases.

My theory, then, is that certain aspects of the autopsy dealing with the adrenal glands were excised at the request of members of the Kennedy family who did not wish the public or anyone to have the X rays or, for that matter, any material which would encourage speculations about the state of the President's health. The photographs were not released, as stated, for reasons of taste. If the family asked that this material be kept in the family, the Warren Commission might not have pressed to examine it.

Such a theory would clear up some other mysteries. It would explain, for example, why the autopsy report reproduced in the Warren Report is undated, a fact Epstein seizes as proof that the original observations of the autopsy doctors were altered. According to the theory we are offer-

ing, the autopsy was altered, or shortened, after the fact, though not for the sinister purposes Epstein suggests. Such a theory also might explain why Dr. Humes inserted a note in the record announcing that he had destroyed notes prepared immediately after the autopsy—a fact which Cook and Salandria stress to indicate the general dubiousness of the autopsy. Humes's action may simply have been that of a faintly guilty and thoroughly bureaucratic professional conscience. (Why Humes—who would be neck deep in guilt if the autopsy was falsified—should have taken pains to incriminate himself is something Cook and Salandria can probably explain.)

I will not pursue the theory further; the reader is probably testing it against notions of his own. But certainly everyone with an opinion on the Warren Report—those who, by and large, accept it, as I do, and those who seriously criticize it, can agree that the X rays and photos must now be made available for competent study and interpretation. If the Kennedy family—which probably has legal title to the documents—will not release them for publication, or even place them in the National Archives for the use of scholars, perhaps a committee of trusted scholars and doctors can be assembled to examine them. Sinister accusations have been made, and the longer these X rays and photos are hidden, the more credible these accusations will appear. If there is something sinister afoot, let us expose it. If there is not, let us silence these accusations and also inhibit what promises to be decades of dreary fantasizing.

THE BRASS PYRAMID

ROBERT G. SHERRILL

Washington

Some people in Washington feel that the military has already begun its quiet coup of the civilian government. Retired colonels and generals climb into positions of authority and then hire their buddies for other important posts. The pyramid of ex-brass grows higher.

Officials in the American Federation of Government Employees, Air Force Lodge 1092 (representing 4,000 civilian employees in the Pentagon) recently estimated that there are 200,000 second-career military retirees on the federal payroll, many of them in top positions and all of them drawing double compensation from the government—that is, they are drawing most of their retirement pay as well as their regular salaries.

"The situation has reached such a magnitude as to constitute a real and genuine threat to continued civilian control of the federal government itself," said Charles J. Kenny, president of the Pentagon civilian group.

Significantly, the Civil Service Commission has refused to debate the issue, stating that the cost of determining how many retired brass are in Washington, and in what positions, would be prohibitive. It has admitted there are about 26,000 retired military men now holding civilian jobs in the Department of Defense alone.

The bitterness of the civilian government labor unions on this point (they claim the military "buddy system" of employment is ruining the chances for advancement to the better jobs) is so intense that periodically the military propagandists crank out a rebuttal. One, issued recently by Col. Benjamin B. Cassiday, Jr., secretary of the Air Staff, actually resulted in substantiating the charges. Speaking of the Pentagon's Air Force Headquarters only, he said that last year twenty-two retired military men were hired, out of 999 appointments, a measly 2.2 per cent of all the appointments.

Ah, yes. But where did these retirees wind up? Thirteen of the twenty-two moved into the six top-ranking government levels (GS-13 through GS-18). Four others were hired at the level of GS-12. This is equivalent to being drafted into the army at the rank of lieutenant colonel.

As for the years 1960 through 1964, when the ex-brass were supposedly *really* rolling into Washington, no statistics have been released despite repeated requests for such information from the unions.

The Dual-Compensation system was revamped in 1963 to permit military retirees to receive full pay for a civilian government job, plus the first \$2,000 of their retirement pay and 50 per cent of the remainder. Thus a colonel who was earning \$9,600 on Monday could retire on Tuesday, step into a GS-13 job and start earning \$19,310—doing the same job, actually, that he was doing the day before. Legal-