

Dallas medical examiner won't

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Dallas County Medical Examiner Charles S. Petty says he will not ask to have Lee Harvey Oswald's body exhumed, because "no reasonable doubts exist" about the body's identity.

Petty last August had asked the Tarrant County medical examiner to exhume the body from Rose Hill Burial Park in Fort Worth in order to determine whether it was Oswald or a Soviet agent posing as Oswald — a

theory put forth by British writer Michael H. B. Eddowes.

In a terse statement issued through his secretary in response to a rash of media inquiries, Petty said the exhumation would not be in the "public interest" and that he would not order one at public expense.

"Additional information that has become available to me (since the exhumation was requested) has convinced me that no reasonable doubts exist regarding the identity of the body in the grave under the name of Lee Harvey Oswald," Petty said.

"The information is contained within the 15-volume report regarding hearings before the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1979. The question of the identity of Lee Harvey Oswald was considered in great detail and no reasonable doubt of identity exists as best as the committee could determine."

Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby two days after he allegedly assassinated President John F. Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Tarrant County Asst. Dist. Atty. Marvin Collins acknowledged that

order Oswald's body exhumed

Petty has the authority to issue a court order to exhume the body. Collins maintained his long-standing position, however, that an order issued by a state district court was the most appropriate procedure.

"Dr. Petty last August requested us to skate out there on thin ice with him and we respectfully declined," Collins said.

Petty said he agreed with the findings of the select committee and said he has taken "great pains to study the report and has communicated with some of those who helped examine

the evidence and prepare the report."

A spokesman said Petty's decision was not based on statements by Oswald's wife and mother that it was Oswald and not an impostor.

In an October press conference, Petty and an associate, Dr. Linda Norton, said there were several identifying characteristics, such as scars and height, that were not mentioned in the original autopsy report or were in conflict with other records.

If there were a second autopsy, the two physicians said they would focus their attention on the teeth and den-

tal records and the mastoid bone behind the left ear.

"There are some things that just don't jibe," Petty said last October. "It's better to answer the question than engage in sheer speculation over a long period of time."

Although Petty could not be reached for further comment Thursday, the chief counsel to the congressional committee said last October that fingerprints of the man arrested as Oswald perfectly matched those of Oswald when he joined the Marine Corps in 1956.