

# Rockefeller Commission lied, pathologist says

BY BOB WOMACK

A pathologist who testified before the Rockefeller Commission about the assassination of President Kennedy said here yesterday that the group's report on the CIA contained "a gross misrepresentation and deliberate distortion" of his testimony.

Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, coroner of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pa., made the comments about the Rockefeller Commission report, released Tuesday, during an appearance at the annual meeting of the Ohio Osteopathic Assn.

Wecht spent most of the time discussing strange deaths he has investigated and the need for more vigilant coroners.

**BUT HE ALSO** discussed the reports of the Rockefeller Commission, which reaffirmed that a single gunman killed Kennedy, and the Warren Commission report on the assassination, which he has disputed since an assignment from the American Academy of Forensic Scientists to probe the report.

Wecht, who testified before the commission May 7, said the Rockefeller report "attempts to imply I had reversed my previous positions on the Warren Commission—an absolutely despicable, reprehensible act."

He said he has also been unable to obtain a copy of the deposition the commission took from him during five hours of testimony.

"The primary essence of my testimony was to show that two gunmen were involved in shooting Kennedy and (Texas Gov. John) Connally and to destroy the single bullet theory, and all of that was ignored," he said.

Wecht said he bases his beliefs on evidence he has examined, including material from Kennedy's autopsy, which the Kenne-



DR. CYRIL H. WECHT

dy family permitted him to look at at the National Archives in 1972.

"I'M JUST insisting that this case be handled as any other routine case," he said, adding that he also disputes the single killer theory in the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy.

He said he examined material from Robert Kennedy's autopsy two weeks after the senator was killed, while serving as a consultant to Los Angeles, Calif., coroner Dr. Thomas Noguchi.

"The shot that killed him was fired from one to three inches away from his

head, and Sirhan Sirhan (who was convicted of the killing) was a couple of feet away," said Wecht.

**WECHT APPEALED** for more investigation of routine sudden deaths that occur, as well.

"In the old days, we were charged with looking into murders. Murders still may be the only cases you read about, but they are by no means the major portion of what we deal with," he said. "There not only are obvious injuries, but there are subtle injuries."

He discussed several examples of cases his office had investigated that were initially misinterpreted by the police—a man supposed to have been murdered who turned out to have died in fall; what was thought to be a murder-suicide or double murder were actually accidental carbon monoxide poisonings; a hit-and-run accident victim was actually murdered.

He said he insists on autopsies for anyone who dies in jail and said that he has seen many such deaths as the result of "a combination of unwillingness or superficiality on the part of hospitals — an unwillingness to deal with what is obviously a 'police case.'"

"**YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** in the emergency room is not to pass social or moral judgement on a person who is hurt," he told the osteopaths.

Wecht, who is also a lawyer, said that half the country's medical schools do not have courses in legal medicine "so it should not be unexpected that the doctors coming out don't know how to relate to these things."

He said he and other forensic pathologists are drafting a proposed legal medicine curriculum and sending it to deans to urge its adoption.