

TO THE VIEWPOINTS EDITOR
DALLAS MORNING NEWS

After the publication of my book JFK: Conspiracy of Silence (Charles A. Crenshaw, M.D. with Jens Hansen and J. Gary Shaw; Signet), in early April 1992, The Dallas Morning News published several articles that acknowledged my presence and participation as one of the attending physicians on the trauma team that tried desperately to save President John F. Kennedy's life at Parkland Hospital on November 22, 1963. Several weeks later, however, around the time of and after a press conference in New York City held by representatives of the Journal of the American Medical Association during which my book and I were personally attacked, The News published several pieces questioning my credibility and accusing me of being motivated in writing the book by a desire for personal recognition and monetary gain.

The accusations were untrue and damaging and were the result of abuse of journalistic power.

Unlike other writers about tragic historical events, researchers and authors who have published evidence of a possible conspiracy in the JFK assassination are typically attacked as liars and profiteers by those with a stake in the lone assassin theory, the apparent goals of such attacks being to silence the messengers and/or to cause them to be ignored. The differences in my case include the fact that a seemingly prestigious medical journal was used to discredit me among my peers. (The News gave JAMA front

page coverage, including a photograph of its editor standing behind the AMA seal, and The News referred to the JAMA articles as "the AMA report" when in fact neither the statements at the press conference nor the subsequent articles were endorsed by the AMA).

Some A second major difference between my book and those written by assassination researchers is that I am neither a conspiracy theorist nor a JFK assassination buff. Instead, I was an eyewitness to history. Primarily, JFK: Conspiracy of Silence relates my personal account of the events of the Kennedy assassination. It includes details of three tragic days at Parkland Hospital when I was a surgical resident, including my perspective of these events.

I have been criticized for saying that the fatal wound to President Kennedy entered the front. Yes, without a doubt, I firmly believe the president was shot from the front; not only in the head, but also in the throat. *and some of the official evidence says this*

On that fateful day in 1963, all of the surgeons in Parkland's Trauma Room No. 1 and numerous other witnesses believed Kennedy was shot at least once from the front. Testifying under oath, nine physicians who viewed the president's head wound at Parkland reported seeing a large defect in the back of the president's head, indicative of an exit wound.

In an attempt to refute this point, excerpts from interviews of my fellow physicians Malcolm Perry, M.T. Jenkins, Charles Baxter and Jim Carrico were published in JAMA's May 1992 article and cited

to show apparent disagreement with me. However, these same four doctors, while testifying under oath before the Warren Commission in 1964, also described a large wound in the back of the president's head. These early sworn descriptions are indicative of a wound of exit caused by a shot from the front, and are in total conflict with the official autopsy.

One writer for The News admitted that, "William Kemp Clark, another Parkland physician working on the president, also believed he saw a large gaping hole in the rear of the president's head." It appears that he made no attempt to contact the other physicians present that day who agree with Dr. Clark and me, such as Dr. Robert McClelland, nor did he contact me to ascertain my "credibility" on this or any other "claim" in my book.

With regard to the four doctors who now supposedly take exception to my description of the president's wounds, it has also been asserted that they "... had a more important role than Dr. Crenshaw in trying to save the president" Placed in proper context, this is not true. Of the six minor surgical procedures performed on President Kennedy, I did the cutdown on his right leg. There was nothing done to the president which could be considered "major" -- all procedures performed were of a resuscitative and life-saving nature.

Just as I am not alone in my opinion regarding the president's head wound, neither am I alone regarding the throat wound. Dr. Malcolm Perry was the physician who performed the tracheostomy

on the dying president, making the necessary incision through the throat wound. Within two hours of the surgery, at a press conference, ^{and Dr Clark} he described the throat wound three separate times as an "entrance wound" and stated that the bullet which caused the wound was "coming at" the president. Dr. Ronald Jones, another attending physician, also called the wound an "entrance wound" in his report filed that day. Dr. Paul Peters, who also assisted, was still calling it an entrance wound four months later when he testified before the Warren Commission.

My decision to go public, after 28 years of silence, came after viewing the president's autopsy photos. These so-called "official" photos in no way depicted the wounds we observed on President Kennedy's body at Parkland Hospital. Indeed, no fewer than forty eyewitnesses in Dallas and at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where the autopsy was later done, have said that they saw a large wound in the back of President Kennedy's head. Is it logical that we could all be wrong?

Furthermore, the conclusions of the House Select Committee's panel of pathologists -- which came fourteen years after the assassination -- were based on the "official" photographs and x-rays, which have been challenged by some of the very technicians involved in taking them at the autopsy. This purported evidence is also in conflict with the observations of at least 27 people who actually saw the wounds that weekend in Dallas. Not one single

person -- from Mrs. Kennedy to the Dallas doctors and nurses -- saw the wounds as the autopsy photographs show them.

It is noteworthy to comment that the same panel of forensic pathologists who studied the 1963 autopsy report concluded that the report was "incomplete" and "inaccurate"; that the pathologists who performed the autopsy "... had insufficient training and experience to evaluate a death from gunshot wounds"; and that the location of the head wound was "incorrect." I had believed that the best forensic pathologists in our nation would perform the autopsy on President Kennedy. I regret that this did not happen. It is surprising that The News followed the publication of the JAMA article with an editorial lauding the two autopsy doctors for publishing "the facts," and erroneously stated therein that the five Dallas doctors who were interviewed by JAMA agreed with the autopsy results. In truth, Dr. McClelland disagreed, and he still believes that President Kennedy was shot from the front, as I do. Neither I, nor Dr. Clark nor Dr. Jones or many others were interviewed for the JAMA article.

Is it because I disagree with the "official" version of the highly suspicious pathological examination of the slain president that I have been accused in The News of "peddling lies?" Are my observations on the assassination threatening to the "official" version? Obviously, an entrance wound to the front of the throat, an exit wound in the back of the head, and an entrance wound(s) in

the president's back meant at least two assassins, one of which
~~could not have been accused assassin~~ Lee Harvey Oswald. 5

Another point in JFK: Conspiracy of Silence that has been criticized is my statement that President Johnson called the Parkland operating room on November 24, 1963, as other physicians and I were trying to save the life of Mr. Oswald, and requested a deathbed confession from the accused assassin. First of all, I never said that President Johnson called me personally. A man called requesting to speak to someone in the operating room, and I was asked to take the call. Corroboration to the fact of this call includes Phyllis Bartlett, former Parkland Hospital switchboard chief, who vividly remembers receiving the call from a man who identified himself as -- and sounded like -- President Johnson. (After The News published an article that questioned my account of this incident, Ms. Bartlett sent a letter to the Editor of The News to set the record straight, but publication was refused.) Additional verification is provided by Dr. Phillip E. Williams, then an intern, who told the New York Times (May 26, 1992 edition), that he remembers someone saying, "the White House is calling and President Johnson wants to know what the status of Oswald is." And still further confirmation is found in official FBI documents which state that agents were ordered to the operating room where they donned robes and masks with the intent of obtaining a deathbed confession from the alleged assassin.

In conclusion, let us reflect on the fact that 31 years have now gone by since the assassination of President Kennedy, yet according to every poll on the issue, at least 70% and as many as 90% of Americans do not believe that the Warren Report's two lone nuts theory (Oswald and Ruby) represents the truth. My book was not written as a historical treatise, but as the recollection of a major event in my life, one that affected me, the history of our nation, and the world. Some of the prior publications in The News about me and the book were irresponsible and appear to be additional examples of unjustified and defamatory remarks intended to enhance the highly controversial "official" version of John F. Kennedy's assassination, thereby perpetuating the conspiracy of silence.