

Video offers 'Best Evidence' of

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The horror, fear and cynicism ignited by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy 28 years ago still lives in the national consciousness, feeding on the doubt that the true events of that day have ever been told.

Last month, for example, ABC News opened the KGB file on Lee Harvey Oswald to find official Soviet doubt that the misfit American could have carried out the shooting alone. And Friday, Hollywood weighed in with *JFK*, another denunciation of the Warren Commission's examination of Kennedy's death.

Credit Rhino Home Video, then, with superb timing in bringing *Best Evidence: The Research Video* (\$14.95, 35 minutes) to market. Produced and directed by David S. Lifton, the program presents the shocking arguments first stated in Lifton's best-selling 1981 book, *Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Macmillan). A



Lee Harvey Oswald



John F. Kennedy

special package of the tape with the book is \$24.95.

Lifton's central contention: In the six hours that the body of the dead president was traveling from Dallas to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, his

deception in Kennedy assassination

wounds were altered to suggest he was killed by one gunman firing from behind. In Lifton's words, the body became a "medical forgery."

His reading of the Warren Commission report led him to question the rampant contradictions between the observations of the Dallas doctors and the Bethesda autopsy.

Much of the video is devoted to interviews Lifton conducted in 1980 with medical workers who were neglected by the Warren Commission. One Dallas witness says he wrapped the body in a sheet and helped place it in a ceremonial bronze casket. But a Navy technician says the body arrived in a cheap shipping casket and was zipped inside a body bag.

Witnesses also tell Lifton that when the corpse was uncovered, there was a "gasping in the room" because the brain was absent from the cranium. Lifton argues it was secretly removed to extract bullet fragments and later replaced.

'Best Evidence' is a genuinely disturbing document.

Despite the incredible claims of body-tampering, Lifton and his witnesses seem level-headed and quite convincing. Lifton even bolsters his theory with actual autopsy photos of Kennedy (obtained, he says, from a former Secret Service agent) that point out the differences between the Dallas medical sketches and the actual condition of the body.

Be warned that the photos may be too strong for some viewers.

Lifton's book presents its case in more than 700 pages, but the video can only touch upon the most powerful points.

What the video doesn't offer is a coherent chronology of what may have actually happened. Just who had access to the body and how they could have perpetrated such a sophisticated hoax is not explained.

Best Evidence doesn't prove its case, but it could shake up anyone who still believes the country wasn't deceived about this central event in our history.