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Postscript to the Assassination

All the physical evidence considered by the Warren Commission in its investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy has now been placed in the National Archives. Included are the X-rays and photographs made during the autopsy on the late President, which heretofore had been in the possession of the Kennedy family.

Access to this evidence will be restricted, which is only proper. Public display of the medical record would be most unseemly, and would serve no constructive purpose. Federal law enforcement officials will, however, be permitted immediate access to the material.

For the next five years, scholars and other unofficial investigators will also be allowed to examine the evidence, with the consent of the Kennedy family. After 1971, pathologists and other medical specialists will be able to study the evidence.

Removing the secrecy which has surrounded much of the pertinent material connected with the assassination is a commendable and necessary action. The fact that this evidence had not been generally available has undoubtedly helped feed all sorts of wild rumors and fanciful theories concerning the assassination.

Now the evidence upon which the War-

ren Commission based its conclusions has become a part of the permanent historical record, for this and later generations to consult. The availability of this material should, objectively, resolve the major doubts held by some critics of the commission's findings.

To be sure, it will not satisfy or silence all the critics. No matter how convincing and final the evidence in the Archives, there will always be those who refuse to accept it, who will cling instead to pet theories of conspiracy and cover-up.

This is not the place to go into the various elaborately constructed hypotheses and charges which seek to refute the commission's essential findings. Highly qualified students of the assassination have already pointed out that these theories tend to fly in the face of logic and evidence, that they ignore or distort important and easily verifiable facts, and that for the most part they demand an outrageous commitment of credulity.

Propagators of such theories—the sensation-mongers, the profit-seekers, and especially the self-servers dedicated to their own querulous political causes—will always be with us. The public must learn to recognize them for what they are. Hopefully, the evidence now in the National Archives will aid in that recognition.