

12 Oct 72

THE MIDLOTHIAN MIRROR
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

- For One Year in Texas \$5.00
- For One Year Outside Texas \$8.00
- Single Copies 15c
- Editor Penn Jones Jr.
- Publisher The Midlothian Mirror, Inc.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

Winner of the 1963 Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award for Courage in Journalism.



EDITORIALS

Assassination Roundup

by Ivan Dryer

Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, for some time a critic of the Warren Commission, became the second private medical expert allowed to examine the heretofore sealed autopsy materials of the late president Kennedy. Wecht, Coroner for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, who was called in to assist Los Angeles Coroner Thomas Noguchi in the autopsy of Robert Kennedy examined the Kennedy X-rays, photographs and other evidence for two days in the national Archives. He disclosed that some of the materials he expected to find including microscopic tissue slides taken from the wound areas and the preserved brain of the president, were NOT in the archives.

These materials, he claimed, in an interview, were essential to determining if the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, could have inflicted all of the wounds from his alleged rear firing position on the sixth floor window of the Texas Schoolbook Depository Building in Dallas.

In a subsequent telephone interview with KABC communicator Elliot Mintz, Dr. Wecht said he planned to petition Kennedy family representative Burke Marshall for the missing pieces of evidence as well as a memorandum of transfer signed by JFK's personal physician, Vice Admiral George C. Berkeley when he delivered the items to Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's secretary who was then inventorying his effects at the archives.

The memorandum listed the missing items, the whereabouts of which no one, including Marshall, Mrs. Lincoln, and government officials, seems able or willing to disclose.

Wecht called attention to an object he described as being shaped like a parallelogram one inch high by three quarters of an inch long which certain photographs revealed in the president's brain. The object was not mentioned in the original autopsy report in '63 and was referred to briefly in a report by a four-doctor panel

convened by then Attorney Gen. Ramsey Clark prior to the Clay Shaw trial. Wecht surmised that the object, lodged in the top of the brain, could be a brain tumor, or a flattened bullet fragment. (If the latter is true, it would represent an additional bullet, at least one more than Oswald could have fired in the allotted time.) The pathologist, who is also a lawyer, termed it "unacceptable that the public has never been told what it was." He continued that his desire to examine this object was a prime motivation for seeking the additional

materials (including the brain) and said he would ask permission to bring with him a team of experts consisting of a pathologist, criminalist, firearms expert, neurosurgeon and document expert to study all the relevant evidence.

After seeing the materials so far available to him, Wecht has reportedly suggested that at least two gunmen were involved in the 1963 assassination but only the missing evidence could prove it, or disprove it.

As we noted in our last issue, Attorneys for former Deputy District Attorney Jack Kirschke have filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus. Kirschke, convicted of killing his wife and her paramour in 1967, is currently awaiting the disposition of his appeal, heard June 27, as well as the petition, which seeks an evidentiary hearing and reversal of his conviction.

The 190-page document, which charges LAPD forensic chemist Dewayne Wolfer with wilful and perjurious testimony, was filed Friday, June 23. The STAR printed a brief flash about it which reached the newsstands the following Tuesday. The lowly underground Los Angeles Star appears to be the first and still the only publication to have made any reference to this important news story. Nor have the other media been excessive in their coverage of it.

Reprinted From

The Sept. 27 L. A. Star