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Kennedy Autopsy Photos

Barred to All Private Persons for at Least 5 Years

By FRED P. GRAHAM
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—Private persons will not receive permission to see the autopsy photographs and X-rays of President Kennedy's body for the next five years, a representative of the Kennedy family disclosed today.

A statement by Burke Marshall, a New York lawyer who has been designated by the Kennedy family to handle requests to see the items, indicated that news media representatives might be denied access to them for much longer.

The 65 X-rays, color transparencies and black and white negatives were placed in the National Archives by the Kennedy family on Monday.

Mr. Marshall's statement was surprising in view of the announcement last night by a Government spokesman that under the agreement with the Kennedy family only nonofficial persons approved by Mr. Marshall would be permitted to see the articles during the first five years.

This had created the impression that Mr. Marshall would give selected private persons access to the material. His latest statement appeared to rule this out.

Mr. Marshall gave no reason for his decision.

No Approval Planned

Reached in New York, where he is general counsel for the International Business Machines Corporation, Mr. Marshall said he would grant no requests from journalists, historians, biographers and researchers for at least five years.

Under an agreement between the President's executors and the Government, only Federal investigative agents have the right during the first five years to see the material without Mr. Marshall's permission.

After the five-year period, selected scholars and researchers will be given access to the pictures and X-rays, he said, but the news media will probably still be excluded.

These restrictions will continue as long as any member of President Kennedy's immediate family lives.

According to testimony before the commission, the undeveloped film and the X-rays were turned over to Secret Service agents in the autopsy room. The agents were reported to have delivered the items to the Kennedy family.

Meanwhile, two physicians who conducted the autopsy on President Kennedy said their conclusions about his wounds were unchanged after they saw the autopsy photographs for the first time yesterday.

Capt. James J. Humes of the Navy and Dr. J. Thornton Boswell said the photographs corroborated their testimony to the Warren Commission and the commission's conclusions about the wounds.

Dr. Humes and Dr. Boswell were both Navy commanders when the President was assassinated in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. They conducted the autopsy that night at the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

Another physician who participated in the autopsy, Col. Pierre A. Finck of the Army, is on duty in Vietnam. Dr. Boswell is now in private practice in Bethesda.

The doctors told the Warren Commission that one bullet had struck President Kennedy in the back of the neck and passed through his body and out the front of his throat.

Critics later charged that the bullet had lodged in the President's back and that the photographs and X-rays had been suppressed to conceal this fact.

According to both physicians, it was unimportant that they had never seen the photographs because they had seen the X-rays during the autopsy and had been able to describe the wounds to the Warren Commission.

"We were there and saw just exactly what the photographs show," Dr. Boswell said.

However, he said it was beneficial that the items were now preserved in the Archives, where "they will be important to those who didn't see the wounds themselves and to corroborate our testimony."

Dr. Boswell said the main purpose for the pictures having been taken had been to have them as evidence against Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin, who had then been captured and was still alive.

The Justice Department asked the Kennedy family to give the items to the Government after critics of the commission's report had complained that the items to the Government after suppressed that even the commission members had not seen them.

Some critics had suggested that the pictures and X-rays had been suppressed to conceal flaws in the commission's conclusion that a single bullet had passed through President Kennedy and wounded Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas as they were riding in a car through Dallas.

The Kennedy family had been widely reported to have withheld the material for reasons of taste.

Lane Threatens Suit

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Nov. 2 (AP)—Mark Lane, a New York lawyer who wrote a book questioning the official verdict of the assassination, threatened today to file suit to open to the public photographic files from the Archives.

Mr. Lane, here to promote his book "Rush to Judgement," issued a statement contending that the turning over of the pictures and X-rays to the Archives "officially confirmed" that "the Warren Commission failed to examine some of the most relevant and vital documents in the case."

Epstein Sees Photos' Value

BOSTON, Nov. 2 (AP)—Edward Jay Epstein, author of "Inquest," which challenged the Warren Commission's investigation of the assassination, says the possibility of a second assassin "will probably be reduced to nil" by the pictures.

Mr. Epstein said in an interview:

"The crucial contradiction in the events that happened Nov. 22 was that the same bullet could have wounded both Kennedy and Texas Governor Connally.

"It's possible that the photographs show a path of exit for that bullet. If we now have photographic evidence that the bullet went through the President's body, this must be seen as new evidence."

"This also proves the main point of my book—that the Warren Commission failed to examine crucial evidence."

Tass Is Critical

MOSCOW, Nov. 2 (AP)—Tass described today the placing of X-rays and photographs in the Archives as an "attempt to hide clues to the mystery" of his assassination.

The official Soviet press agency said that "a great number of articles and books appeared

which criticize the Warren Commission for its incomplete and unobjective report." Tass said they "express the opinion" that Oswald had "hardly acted alone."

Robert Kennedy Comments

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York when asked Tuesday night why the executors of his brother's estate had placed the restrictions on the pictures and X-rays, said that "the reason is so obvious it shouldn't need spelling out."

He said the items turned over to the Archives were things the general public would not be concerned about that they would be of interest only to medical persons, Federal police officers and federally appointed investigators.