and subsequent microscopic study of relevant tissues after elaborate processing by technicians. One or two months may be required in some cases.

the country. Within any one state, practices can vary, legally. Within Maryland, where the President’s body was taken, as elsewhere, state autopsy regulations do not apply to those performed on federal property. Private

studies evaluate autopsy practices in some states as entirely inadequate.

Dr. John Nichols, Professor of Pathology at the University of Kansas, informs me that "In a few states the laws are quite loose and the coroner himself can legally do the autopsy even if he is a truck driver in apparent ignorance of things medical." On the other hand, in Connecticut, "It is a legal requirement that the pathologist be "certified," meaning by the American Board of Pathology. As I also learned, a pathologist, experienced in determination of the cause of death from natural causes, may be within the required competence when he probes for the actual cause of death in crimes of violence.

When I learned from my own local officials that getting a definitive statement of the State of Maryland minimum autopsy requirements would be impossible or meaningless, on May 11, 1966, I tried the District of Columbia, which is under federal control. A phone call to the coroner’s office there was quite informative until it was clear my interest was in what would the autopsy protocol have contained if it had been that of a President? Until that moment the requirements were explained with care. In the final analysis the results of the autopsy are no better than the person doing it.

Suppose a man had been shot to death. I was told, and there were two bullets in his body, or two bullet holes. The autopsy examination would include taking his body apart to actually trace the paths of both bullets. If the bullets were fired from different weapons or by different people,
Autopsies done in teaching hospitals of medical schools in cases of natural death are usually searching and exhaustive. Most advances in medicine were obtained at the autopsy table. Autopsies also done in such hospitals at request of a coroner, who may be a non-medical person elected by popular vote, are also usually of a high standard. However, medico legal autopsies done in less disciplined institutions frequently fall short of obtaining all possible evidence to convict the guilty and acquit the innocent. The Naval Hospital in Bethesda is the pride and joy of the Navy. It should be the capstone of American (world) medicine ????
The purpose of the autopsy has not been achieved. When a derelict is shot to death in the District of Columbia, this is what happens. "Just the other day," I was told, there had been a case like it. And I was assured, there is no body found except flesh rent by bullets.

With a bum in the District of Columbia, where the President lives, this is what happens. With the President, examined across the boundary line, in a federal hospital in Maryland, with autopsy surgeons on the federal payroll, it is what didn't happen - but should - and could have.

Dr. Nichols is making a study of the Kennedy autopsy. He has published a "Special Contribution" in the July 10, 1967, Journal of the American Medical Association. His earlier researches indicate that the President did have Addison's disease, an adrenal deficiency. His medical sleuthing was careful and detailed, extending backward through medical annals and newspapers for a period of 10 years. While he found it "noteworthy" there was no evidence, this all alone never handicapped the President, that he "was continuously engaged in strenuous mental and physical activity," Dr. Nichols also felt impelled to comment that "the autopsy protocol is curiously silent" on the Addison's disease "as well as details of the pituitary, of his vertebral column and sacro-iliac joints".

The reader will recall that the President had survived repeated almost-fatal spinal surgery.

There is no stigma attached to Addison's disease, Dr. Nichols concluded, and control over it can be maintained more perfectly than, for example, over diabetes. It need never have interfered with his active as President.

There can be little disagreement with Dr. Nichols' opinion "that the public is entitled to knowledge of the health of their Chief Executive and candidates for this office." One of the possible explanations
In "strange silence" in the autopsy is "suppression...by relate
lural officials, or both." There may be doubt about the inspirait
the suppression but not about the fact of it.

A number of scientists and scientific groups have commented un-
favorably about the President's autopsy examination and report, its co-
spicious deficiencies and inadequacies and the exclusion of all non-
personnel from the examination. Because Dr. Nichols is of unquestioned
medical qualification and is making a study of this particular autops-

...be present. The body must be absolutely identified. The protocol on the
late President does not indicate that he was identified!! The body must
be weighed, measured and inspected all over; all orifices must be examined,
especially the vagina in the female. Sketches with measurements must be made
of any unusual findings together with color and black-white pictures. These
photographs should be taken by the pathologist himself so-one-less person
will be subpoenaed for the defense to tangle up at trial. They should also
be developed by the pathologist himself. Entry and exit bullet holes must be
recorded with precision. The pathologist himself should x-ray the body com-
pletely. The films must be developed and inspected prior to starting the
autopsy; this may require 15 minutes but knowing the number and position of
bullets is important as well as broken bones, tips of knife blades, etc. The
pathologist keeps the film negatives himself to use at trial.

The remainder of the autopsy is somewhat like the usual hospital case.
Of course, blood must be drawn for subsequent possible examination for poisons
where the deceased was . . .

...wo sith six times while visibly asleep in bed. The accused confessed. However, microscopic exam-
ination of the heart revealed death occurred four hours prior to shooting.
The accused was released because you cannot kill a dead man.

Nothing like this was involved in the President's murder, but the
same principles are, the same scientific and legal requirements which
were not met. When the examination was conducted, there was a live one
to be defended in court. After he, in turn, was murdered, a "review"
autopsy report, which would not be subject to cross-examination - for it
was then nothing to take to court - was filed. It was suppressed for
months and then only partly released, with the mass and sensation of n-
Report, which submerged it and denied it the close scrutiny it re-
tends expected.

There is nothing right about this autopsy, nothing final, noth-
ing that satisfies the need for definitive, irrefutable fact. It is in-
complete, incompetent, lacking honesty and objectivity in its re-
porting to every single official use and misuse that was made of it, beg-
ning suppression and continuing with gutting.

We have as a national record, a final memento of a President's-
ruined autopsy report in eviscerated files - eviscerated evidence,
eviscerated history.

Extra space

This, unfortunately, is not untypical. It is the total lack of
the evidence, all the investigation, all files and records.

For this President the archive is adequately served with
older, carbon copies and Xeroxes of them of uncertain
original, altered and incomplete documents; doctored pictures never
original, never properly introduced into evidence (none of the vital one,
not a single one - in accordance with the minimum requirements of law,
only those that could not be avoided - then only when they could no lo-
be avoided; and unstinted, uninhibited suppression, with each of these
agents having a vested interest in suppression exclusively empower-
adequate and effectuate it.

This archival monument to the President is like the investiga-
tion of murder, for that, too, was of conspicuous incompleteness, designed
honesty and calculated indefiniteness. Essential witnesses were
tought not called, their evidence denied the solution of the crime and
Evidence was destroyed. Its destruction was virtually assured by con-
sequence and action - in the case of the pictures, as PHOTOGRAPHIC WITH
records and documents with the Commission's own until-thent suppressed M!