

A Case of Malpractice

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Buried in a plot at Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio, lays one of a number of presidents who died of malpractice. Sep., 19, marks 118 years since James Garfield Died at the hands, of his medical doctor's. Like Washington, Jackson, Adams and others, Garfield also died of malpractice.

This sad story begins with a deranged man, Charles Guiteau, a lawyer. Derangement is not a requirement to practice law, but I am told it helps. Guiteau had it in for president Garfield, since his life long dream had been appointment as ambassador to France (yes, I said he was deranged). Since his application had been rejected Guiteau decided to kill Garfield. He stalked Garfield to a train station and finally chose this as his time. Lying in ambush and revealing himself at the last moment, Guiteau shot Garfield twice. Both shots were non-fatal.

Guiteau was immediately shown the amenities of the Washington DC jail. Interestingly enough he actually visited the jail days before to check out the facility for its creature comforts.

Garfield was rushed to the White House for care. One bullet had grazed his arm, the other lodged internally several inches from the spine. Trauma to this area did cause some nerve damage and Garfield complained of numbness in his legs. His Medical Doctor however had other thoughts. Willard Bliss, MD, the first to examine, Garfield, decided to dig an unwashed finger, and latter a non sterile probe into the entry hole. In his digging about he ran his dirty finger into Garfields liver, creating a false passage that lead other doctors (hands also unwashed) into following the erroneous tunnel to the liver. Garfield was in no danger of dying from the wound, the bullet had lodged into soft tissue near the spine, but it was not in or pressing on any vital structures.

Garfields Medical Doctors continued to probe for the lost bullet. A three inch hole gradually became a twenty inch crevice running from the presidents rib to his groin, discharging frothy ozzing puss on a daily basis. He was placed on a brandy and milk diet (malnourishing him) and to his doctors suprise he still lost weight. Despite the best Allopathic care available, Garfield managed to survive almost eighty days. By the time he died, Garfield went from a healthy 210 lbs. down to a skeleton of 130 lbs.

The Medical Doctors managed to take a stable patient with a non fatal wound and kill him with the best care available. The bill for the Allopathic physicians came to \$85,000.00 dollars, over a thousand a day!!! Keep in mind the presidents salary in 1881 was only \$50,000.00 dollars per year. Congress was so outraged they reluctantly paid only \$10,000.00 dollars of it.

Oh. And of Charlie Guiteau's fate. Typical lawyer was he. He pleaded that he did not kill the president. His defense was that he wounded the president, and that the MD's actually killed Garfield. Medical malpractice however did not fly with the jury. They found him guilty and he was hung.

Guiteau's body however was not turned over to his family for burial. Rather it was turned over to the doctor's who proceeded to, (and this is factual even if bizarre), strip the corps of its, organs tissues and tendons. The skeleton was bleached, disarticulated and then vengfully placed in a vault at the Army Medical Museum, by the Surgeon General of the day, C. H. Crane, MD.

Oh. By the way Crane helped to look after Garfield, and stuck his unwashed finger into the wound also. You could say Crane had a finger into everything.

If you would like more information on Naturopathic Medicine or why doctors should wash their hands, (or if you want an appointment with a doctor who washes his hands) call Dr. Lyndon Capon.

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