

# Diagnosing Giants: Solving the Medical Mysteries of Thirteen Patients Who Changed the World

By Philip A. Mackowiak

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Could Lincoln have lived? After John Wilkes Booth fired a low-velocity .44 caliber bullet into the back of the president's skull, Lincoln did not perish immediately. Attending doctors cleaned and probed the wound, and actually improved his breathing for a time. Today medical trauma teams help similar victims survive—including Gabby Giffords, whose injury was strikingly like Lincoln's. In *Diagnosing Giants*, Dr. Philip A. Mackowiak examines the historical record in detail, reconstructing Lincoln's last hours moment by moment to calculate the odds. That leads him to more questions: What if he had lived? What sort of neurological function would he have had? What kind of a Constitutional crisis would have ensued?

Dr. Mackowiak, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, offers a gripping and authoritative account of thirteen patients who took center stage in world history. The result is a new understanding of how the past unfolded, as well as a sweeping survey of the history of medicine. What was the ailment that drove Caligula mad? Why did Stonewall Jackson die after having an arm amputated, when so many other Civil War soldiers survived such operations? As with Lincoln, the author explores the full contest of his subjects' lives and the impact of each case on the course of history, from Tutankhamen, Buddha, and John Paul Jones to Darwin, Lenin, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

When an author illuminates the past with state-of-the-art scientific knowledge, readers pay attention. Candice Millard's *Destiny of the Republic*, about the medical malpractice that killed President James A. Garfield, was a *New York Times* bestseller. And Dr. Mackowiak's previous book, *Post-Mortem: Solving History's Greatest Medical Mysteries*, won the attention of periodicals as diverse as the *Wall Street Journal* and *New England Journal of Medicine*, which pleaded for a sequel. With *Diagnosing Giants*, he has written one with impeccable expertise and panache.

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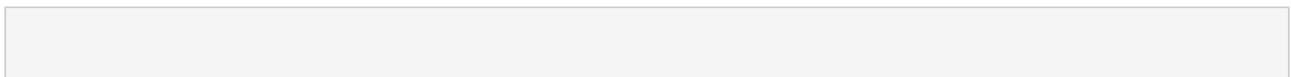
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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"[M]edical biographies provide a unique perspective on our heroes, reminding us of their human frailties. Retrodiagnosing, however, skirts all this agony. The 'patients' are long past helping, so the intellectual satisfaction of solving a diagnostic puzzle can be enjoyed without any of the pressure. It's the difference between reading a detective novel and doing real police work." --*The Wall Street Journal*

"Dr. Mackowiak is to be congratulated for making the CPC format enjoyable, educational, and thought-provoking for current and future physicians." --*Clinical Infectious Diseases*

#### About the Author

**Philip A. Mackowiak** is Emeritus Professor of Medicine and Carolyn Frenkil and Selvin Passen History of Medicine Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland.

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