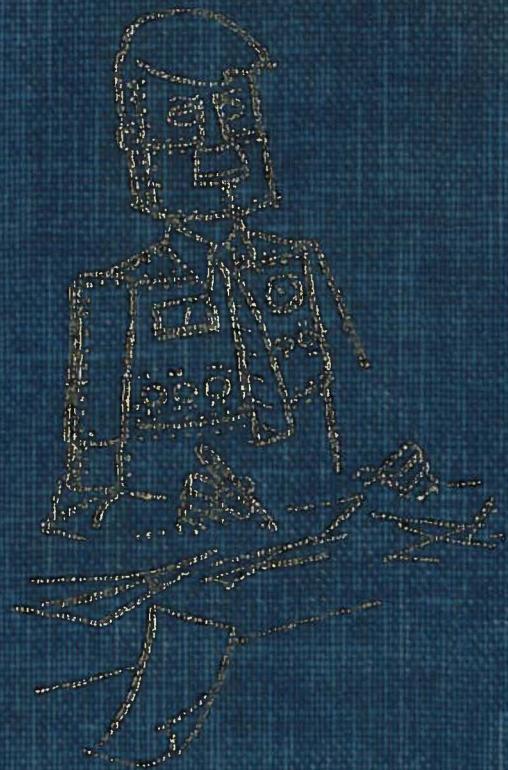


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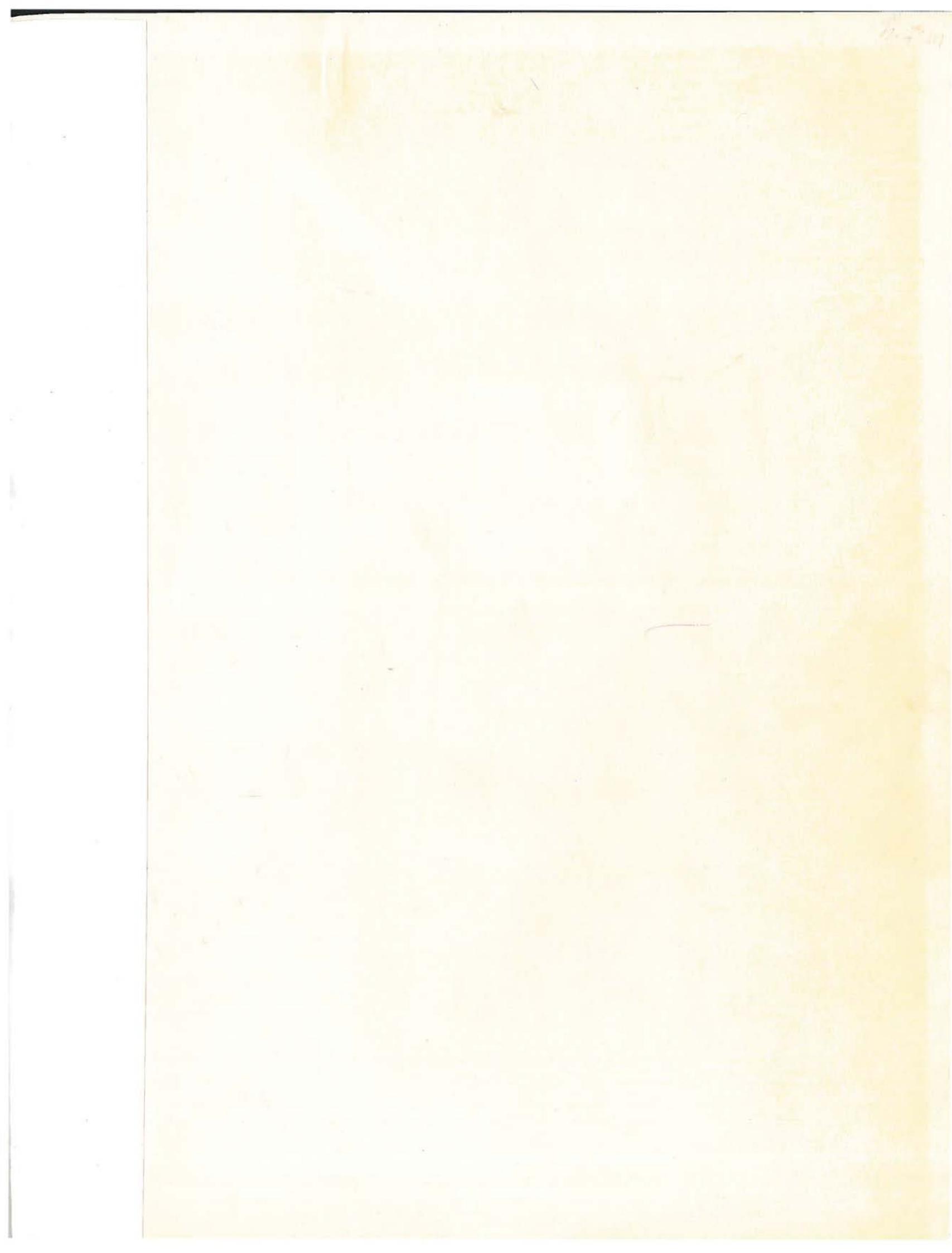
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IN MEMORY OF

ALPHEUS JOHN GODDARD

OF THE CLASS OF 1893

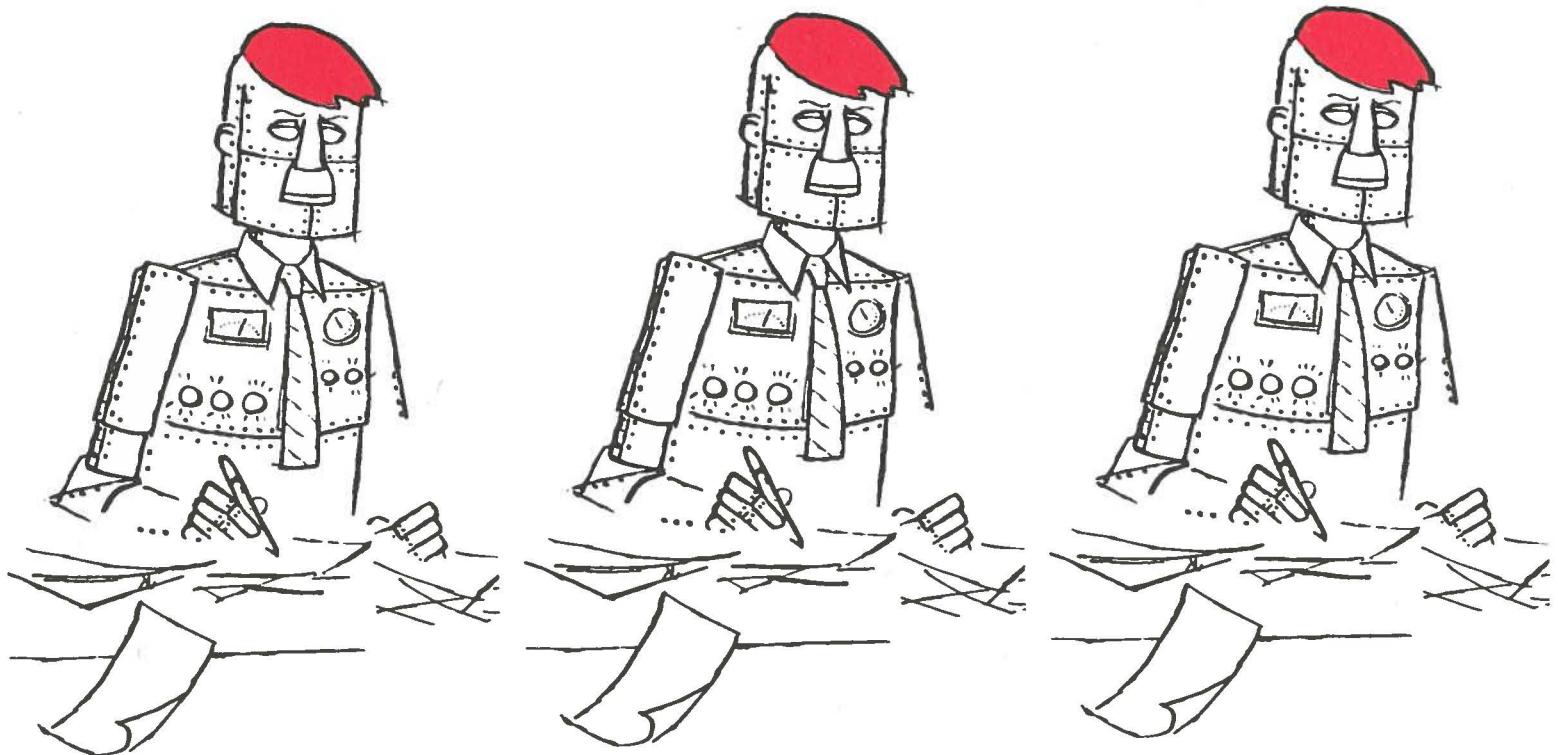




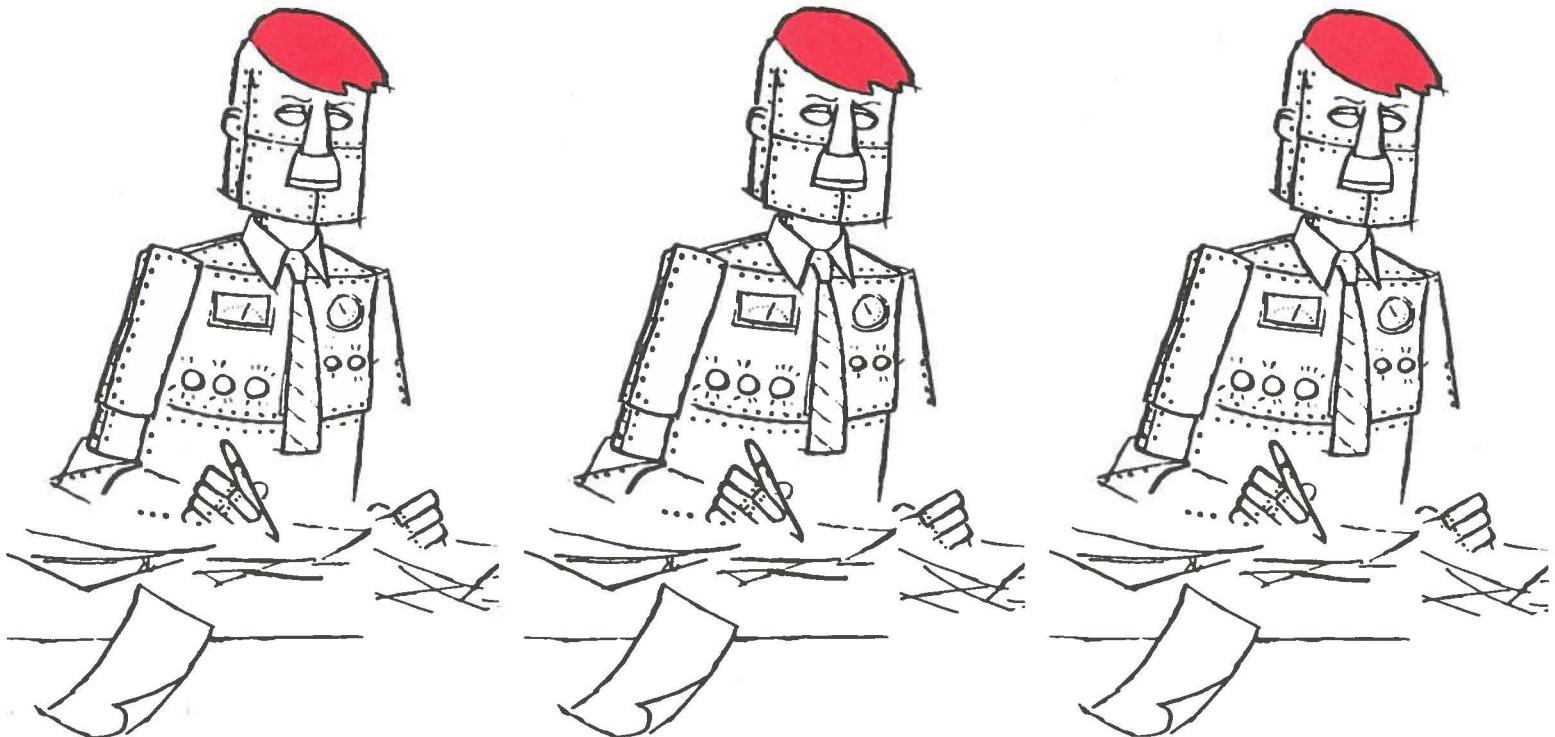
*Kennedy's Robot Signs a Photograph for His Master*

*THE ROBOT THAT HELPED TO MAKE A PRESIDENT*

# the robot that helped



# to make a president



A RECONNAISSANCE INTO THE  
MYSTERIES OF  
JOHN F. KENNEDY'S SIGNATURE

*By* Charles Hamilton

New York: 1965

Books by Charles Hamilton

*Cry of the Thunderbird: The American Indian's Own Story*  
(Macmillan, New York, 1950)

*Men of the Underworld: The Professional Criminal's Own Story* (Macmillan, New York, 1952)

*Braddock's Defeat* (University of Oklahoma, 1959)

*Collecting Autographs and Manuscripts* (University of Oklahoma, 1961)

*Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose*  
(University of Oklahoma, 1963, with Lloyd Ostendorf)

*The Robot That Helped to Make a President* (New York, 1965)

Pamphlets by Charles Hamilton

*The Strange History of . . . Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York, 1947)

*Nine Poems* (New York, 1961)

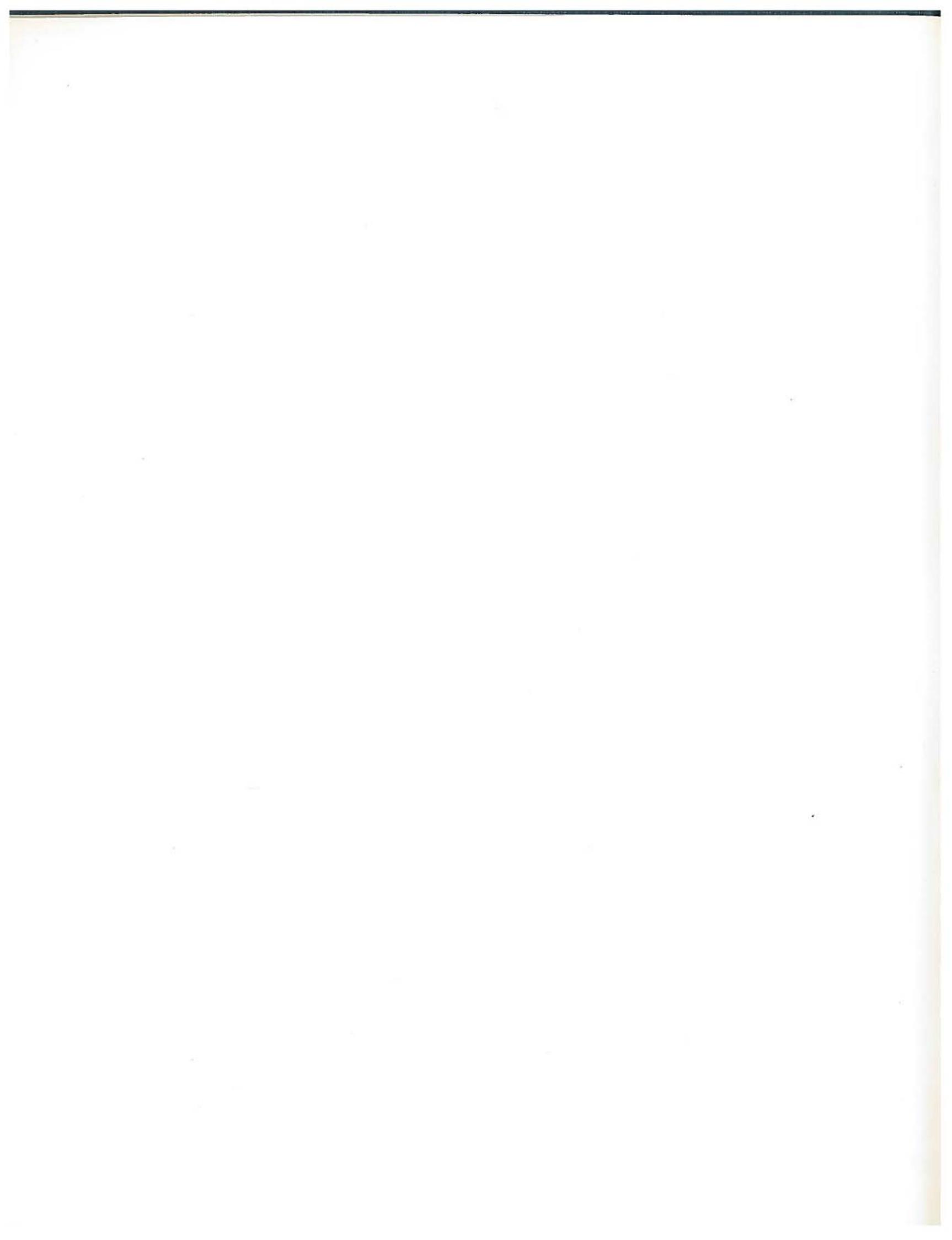
*The Ship of Night* (New York, 1963)

x 973.8 K 383

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APR 22 1966

To my wife  
DIANE  
who aided in every way to  
make this a better book.



## PREFACE



UPPOSE THERE EXISTED IN THE WHITE HOUSE a robot which could write the President's signature swiftly and expertly, creating a fabrication so perfect that it would pass as authentic in any court of law?

- Such a robot could sign a document which might plunge the nation into war.
- Such a robot could sign mandates if the President were indisposed or absent or if he died and the news of his death were withheld.
- Such a robot could be a terrifying weapon in the hands of unauthorized persons.

It sounds like science fiction. Yet this unreasoning automaton actually did exist, somewhere in our Executive Mansion! It was classified as top secret, and some Presidential aides vehemently denied its existence.

Although its use was very limited, it remained, like the imitative skill of those private secretaries who put the President's signature to letters, a threat to American security.

The murder of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 also marked the "death" of his notorious robot.



## INTRODUCTION



FRIEND OF MINE OBSERVED RECENTLY, "psychologists might find a great deal to theorize about if they were to study Kennedy's signature. It seems to me as though there is a curious immaturity to it—as if Kennedy were not sure of himself."

Certainly it is true that, even as President, Kennedy signed his name in a bewildering variety of ways, from hurriedly scrawled and illegible contractions to his entire name penned with almost Palmer-like fluency. He is the first great figure in American history to vary his signature according to whim.

If we were to follow the wild tangent of some of those scholars who lamely contend that Shakespeare never lived because his handwriting and the spelling of his name occasionally differ in the five known examples, then what must we say of Kennedy? Obviously the man was a myth!

The amateur chirographer might assume that, since Kennedy's signature varied so greatly, a robot or his secretaries could write it for him without detection. After all, since his signature was never the same, who could say for certain whether it was penned by a mechanical hand, a secretary or by Kennedy himself?

It was perhaps this false principle that led to the ill-advised policy for the Presidential aides to declare genuine every signature of Kennedy which was mailed from his campaign headquarters or the White House. But each robot signature followed its own undeviating pattern, and each

secretary eventually injected his own personality into every Kennedy imitation. This makes the proxy signatures very easy to spot!

Some of Kennedy's aides have admitted that he personally signed very few letters or documents. Shortly before the President's death, a distinguished political leader approached Kennedy's brother, Robert, the attorney general, asking:

"I wonder if you could spare something in the President's handwriting for one of my constituents who collects autographs."

Replied "Bobby": "I collect autographs myself and I have great trouble getting anything in his handwriting or persuading him to sign anything!"

Kennedy's signature is already the rarest of any President. Nearly every day I am offered letters or photographs bearing machine or proxy signatures, and I have the unhappy task of telling the owners that their treasures were not personally signed. Very often the letters and photographs which I am obliged to condemn as robot or secretarial bear authentications from members of the Presidential staff.

If the duties of the President are so overwhelming that he cannot personally attend to all of them, perhaps one answer to the press of work is for the President to sign absolutely nothing except important state papers and official documents, and those only with initials. Secretaries could sign—but not with the President's alleged signature—all his routine mail. Autograph seekers could be pacified with facsimile signatures and a polite letter of explanation.

But for White-House officials to deny that the robot was used (and even to identify robot signatures as authentic) or to claim that aides and secretaries never signed his name for him, is to throw open a whole new line of inquiry and cast doubt upon other statements issued for President Kennedy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "charles h. saylton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'c' at the beginning.

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# 1 MAN OR ROBOT?

ICTURE A HUGE, FACELESS ROBOT which grips a fountain pen in claws of steel. At the push of a pedal, its hidden parts awake and its metal arm moves firmly and quickly over a sheet of paper to perform the very human function of scrawling a name:



Tirelessly the robot works, signing thousands of letters, papers and photographs.

This is the remarkable automaton which for more than seven years relieved Kennedy of his burden of writer's cramp and helped him to reach the highest office in the world.

The margin of Kennedy's victory over his opponent Richard Nixon was very small—so small that the good-will created by letters signed by the robot may have won him the office of President.

Many Presidents have used steel- or rubber-stamp signatures—Andrew Johnson, Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt among them—but no

chief executive before Kennedy employed a robot to sign his name.

Nearly a century and a half ago Thomas Jefferson invented the polygraph, a machine which, in response to the movement of a master-pen in the hand of the writer, would start a whole row of pens and simultaneously sign a dozen or more documents.

But the "tin man" indentured to Kennedy was entirely different. Kennedy would write a "master" or "guide" signature to serve as a pattern. The master signature was then transferred to a matrix and adjusted in the automaton. Each time the robot was motivated by the pressing of a foot pedal, the pen moved swiftly across the page in a pre-coordinated pattern, writing a perfect signature. Although the pattern was identical for each signature, there were sometimes tiny differences between signatures of the same pattern because the operator moved the paper slightly during the signing process or because a different pen was used or the pen failed to leave an even ink deposit. Yet portions of each signature may be superimposed perfectly over comparable portions of other signatures of the same pattern.

Six different robot signatures are known at present. Five are patterned from original signatures of Kennedy. The sixth is probably from a Kennedy imitation furnished by an aide.

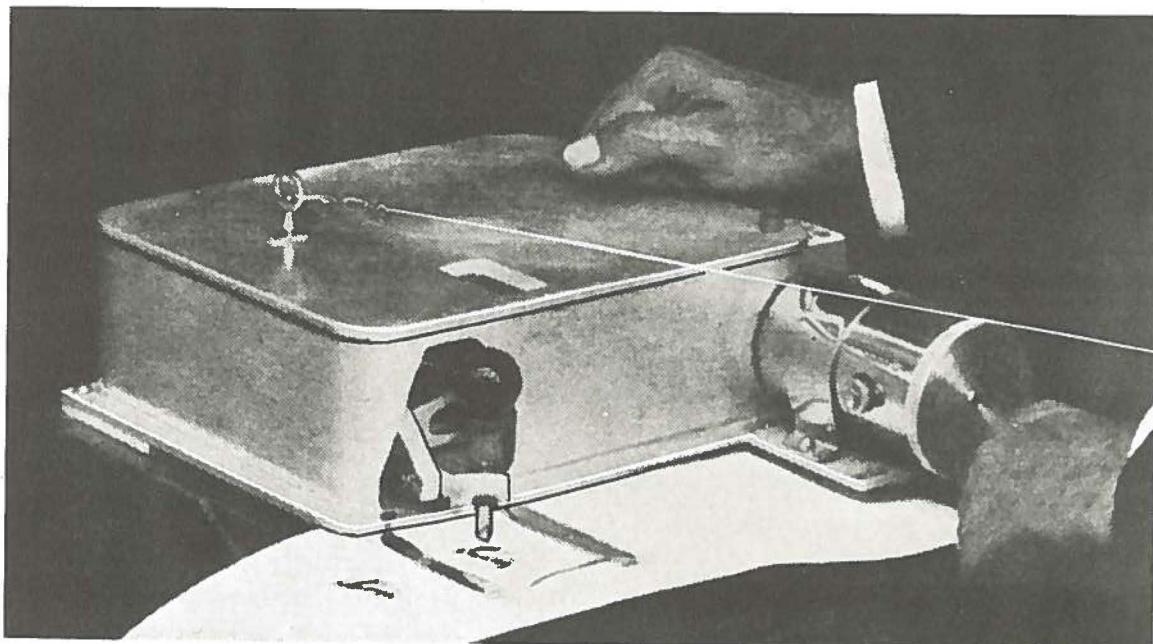
The six patterns are here reproduced on a loose sheet of tissue paper so that you can place them over the corresponding illustrations and see precisely how the robot signed Kennedy's name—each time with the same pattern, yet with minute variations which give an educated personality to the machine. (But the robot never learned the three R's—only one of them!)

According to Dr. James T. Culbertson, author of *The Minds of Robots*, it is conceivable that automata could develop consciousness or sense perception which might influence their behavior. If this had happened with Kennedy's

robot, the horrors of Capek's R.U.R. might have moved from the world of dramatic imagination into the world of political reality!

### *The Story behind Kennedy's Robot*

The idea of creating a robot which could imitate the human skill of writing dates back to the ancient Arabs, but



Signo invented by P.-M. Durand (1916)

it was not until the eighteenth century that Friedrich von Knaus, regarded by his contemporaries as a great inventor, devised a successful mechanical writer. The French magician, Robert Houdin, also a noted mechanician, experimented with a similar machine; and P. T. Barnum had in his museum a robot penman which was destroyed in the great New York fire of 1865. In 1916 a French inventor, P.-M. Durand, devised a machine which he called the "Signo," pictured on this page, an automaton very similar to the

robot used by Kennedy. Later the Signo was incorporated in a human effigy romantically known as "Professor Arcadius" which could write and sign perfectly an entire sentence!

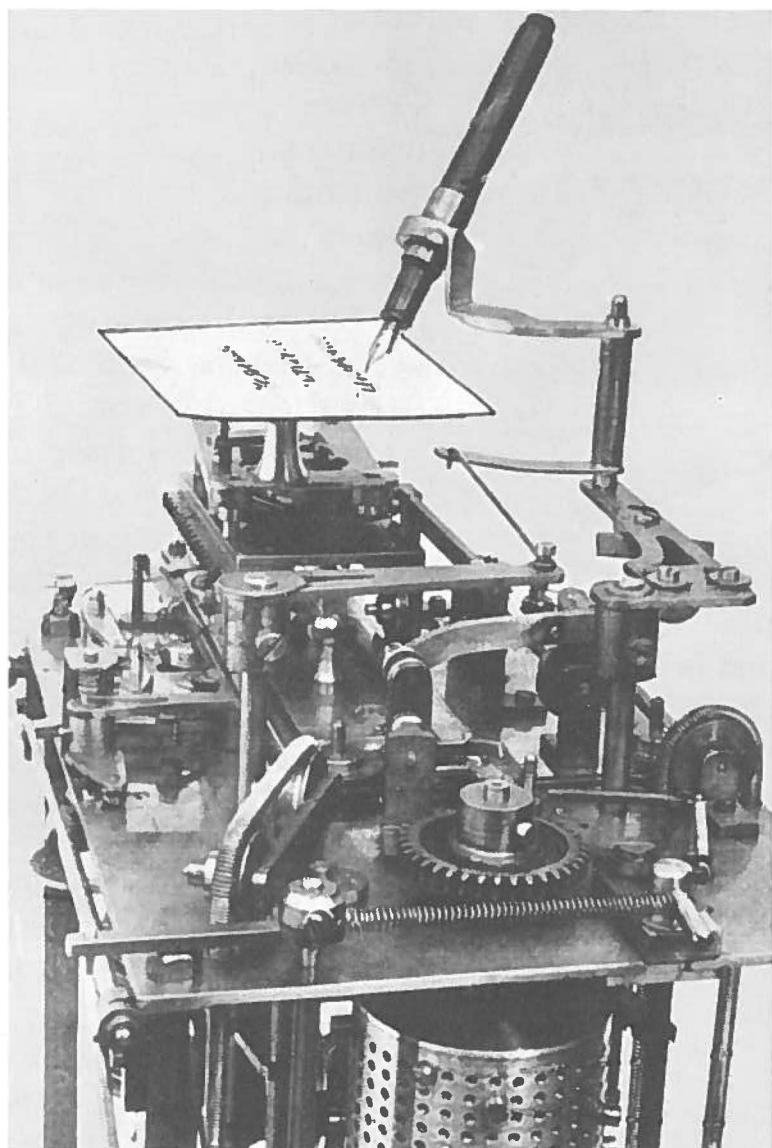
*Dans un bon lot de qualités  
attention à la persévérance*  
*Arcadius*

Handwriting and signature of "Professor Arcadius."

Imagine! with such a device installed in the figures of Mme. Tussaud's wax museum, the colorful personalities of the past, from Washington to Kennedy, could all scribble for visitors authentic replicas of their signatures! Robespierre could again sign the death warrant of Danton, and Lincoln could once more set free the slaves with a bold signature to the Emancipation Proclamation!

*Writing Machine Invented in 1946 by M. F. Wiesendanger*

Powered by an electric motor, this complicated device operates a fountain pen with almost human skill. The writing pattern is first set by an adjustment of the screws in the large cylinder. The machine then writes not only a signature but a complete, brief text!



### *The Type of Robot Used by Kennedy ➤*

"A fountain pen come to life" is the apt description of this amazing mechanical writer by its manufacturer, the International Autopen Company of Arlington, Virginia.

The Autopen can turn out as many as 3,000 signatures in a single eight-hour day from a "master" signature on a matrix, each an exact reproduction of the original. A dial regulates how swiftly each signature is written. At its lowest speed, the robot signs about as fast as the average man; but at top speed, it signs twice as swiftly as any human can write.

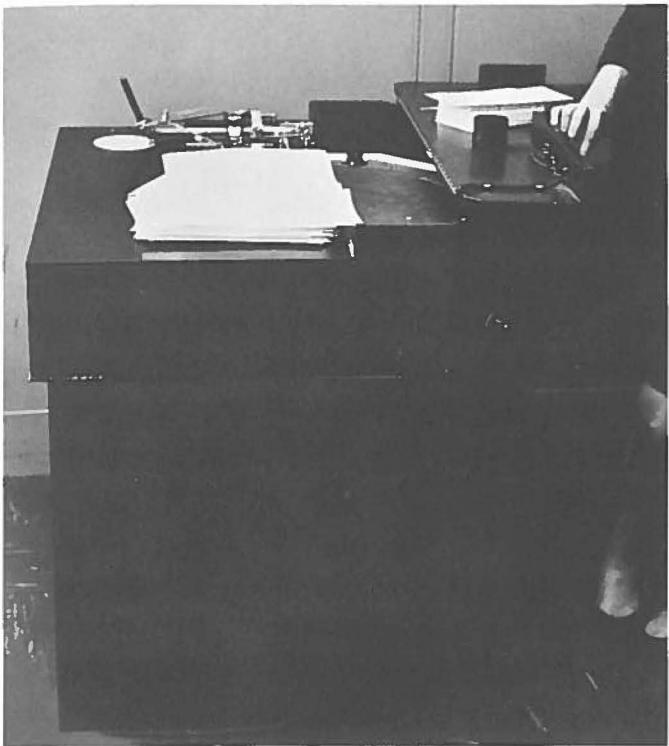
The "Model 50" Autopen, of which more than 200 are now used in the United States government offices, is believed to be the identical model employed by Kennedy. Because of the confidential task assigned to these robots, however, the names of their employers are, with a few exceptions like the FBI and the Democratic National Committee, kept darkly secret. I have discovered also that the machine is or was used by Robert F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

A foot pedal activates the Autopen, leaving the operator's hands free to feed in letters or documents. Or the robot can be placed "on automatic," and will continue to sign at brief intervals as fast as the operator can push letters under the pen. There is a lighted glass disk directly beneath the pen; and before using any signature pattern, the operator allows the pen to write on the glass. This temporary signature reflects through the paper and acts as a guide for placing each letter or document in exactly the right place.

According to the International Autopen Company, the robot writer "is as legal as though you had signed the paper yourself." They cite as an example that a state bond issue was signed by the machine, and the state's attorney-general passed upon the legality of the signature.

Provocative, is it not? Since a document or letter signed by the robot has been ruled legal, could the tin man continue to sign legally after his owner's death? And if a matrix were made from a genuine signature of Washington to be executed by the robot with a quill pen in authentic ink of the period on old hand-laid paper would it be considered authentic—or would it be a forgery? Or what would it be?

## *The Automatic Signature-Writing Machine*



Full view of the machine



Activating the robot by foot pedal

The Model 50 Autopen is 34 inches high, 34 inches wide, and 34 inches deep. It weighs 100 pounds and operates on a current of 110 volts, 60 cycles. Among other uses recommended by the Autopen Company is "Autographing Books and Pamphlets."

The machine is priced at \$975, with an additional \$40 (heavy duty, \$60) for a signature recording on a plastic matrix.

Believed to be the invention of R. M. De Shazo and his brother, this model has been in use since about 1958, replacing an earlier model in which the matrix was on the side of the machine.

Matrixes can be interchanged in a few seconds, so that the same machine can sign for many persons. As a security measure, the matrixes are usually locked in a special metal cabinet when not in use.



The robot writing a signature

I got an appointment to view the robot and saw it sign letter after letter, each with a perfect signature. Then I asked the operator: "Doesn't the signature pattern on the matrix ever wear out?"

"Oddly, no." The operator lifted the matrix out of the machine. "See how light it is, all plastic. It actually lasts longer than these metal posts between which it passes in activating the pen. When the posts get worn on one side, and the signature tends to level out, we simply turn them around and use the other sides. When both sides are worn, we replace the posts. But we only replace the matrix if it accidentally gets chipped."

"What are these wavy lines in the matrix? It looks like a crudely carved boomerang."

"As the matrix passes through these little metal posts, each curve affects the movement of the pen. And these humps on top of the matrix lift the pen up, so as to separate the first from the last name, or dot an *i*."

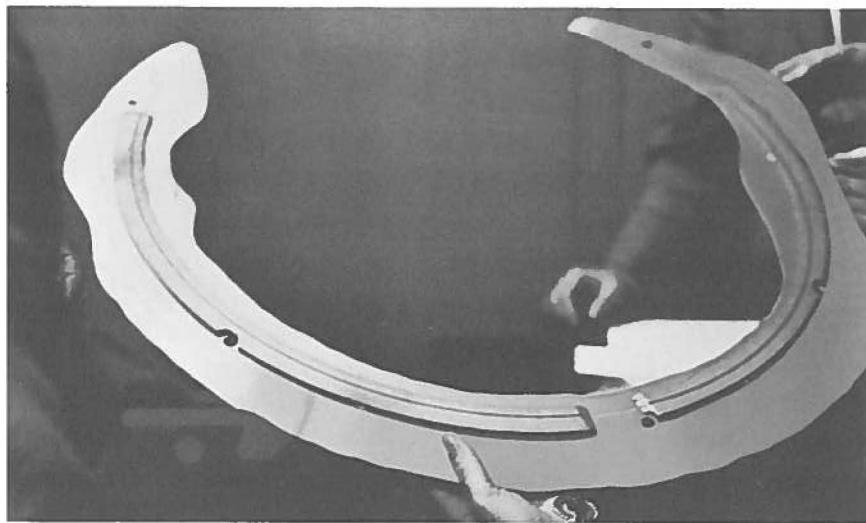
The operator fitted the matrix into the machine on a large flat circular wheel, then pushed the starting switch. He showed how the signature was written as the wheel rotated, passing the matrix between the two posts, with a pause until the matrix completed a full rotation and returned for another signature. "Watch," he said. "I will duplicate the job of the matrix with my hand." He wiggled the two posts, producing a wild scribble on the paper. "If I practised for many years, I might be able to write a word or two."

"Can you use any sort of pen?"

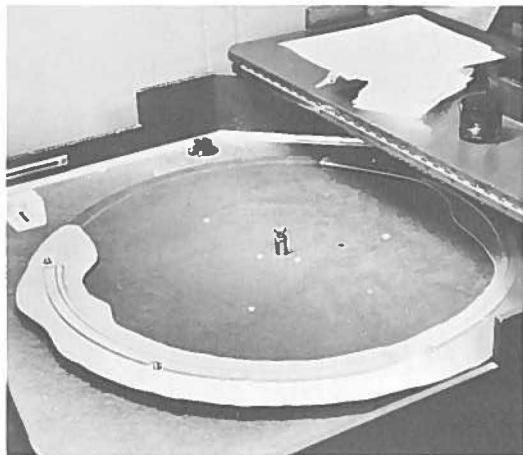
"Yes; right now I'm using an Esterbrook. But even a pencil will sign as well." He took out the Esterbrook and fitted a ball-point pen into the circular metal claw, tightening a screw to secure it. This time the pen signed with a spidery scrawl, with open o's not visible in the Esterbrook signature.

"And if," continued the operator, "I sign with the machine working at top speed, the o's and e's and a's tend to fill with ink. Or if the pen is fastened in the holder too low, there may even be an extra flourish in the signature. Or too high, whole letters may disappear. Definitely this machine has got a mind of its own."

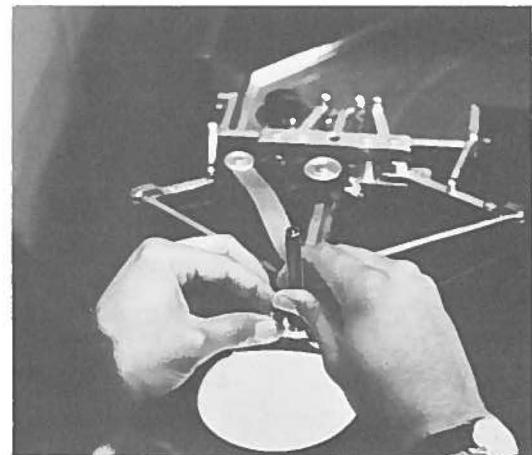
## *The Robot at Work*



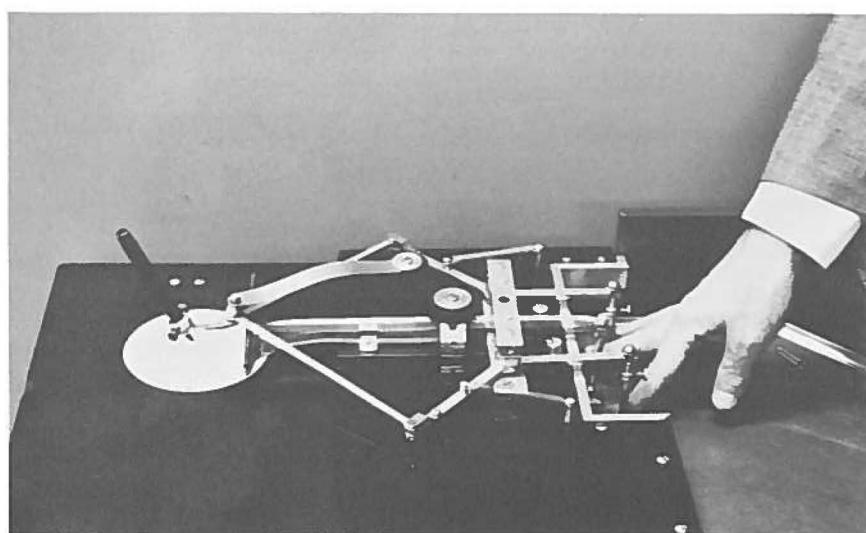
Signature recording on a matrix



The matrix adjusted in the machine



Placing a pen in the robot



Operating the mechanism by hand

## *The President's Aides Get Their Signals Mixed*



On June 15, 1961, Kennedy's special assistant, Kenneth O'Donnell, admitted that the President had used a machine to sign his letters during the Presidential campaign. A year and a half later, Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, vehemently denied the existence of a robot signer, exclaiming to newsmen:

"Absolutely untrue! There is no such machine!"

Under pressure Salinger later admitted the existence of the automaton but denied that it was ever used in the White House. (See Robot Signature Pattern VI, used while Kennedy was President.)

In his fascinating book, *Congress: The Sapless Branch* (Harper and Row, 1964), Senator Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania candidly admits that he dictates and signs very few of the thousands of letters sent out over his signature each year. Form letters are typed on a roboTyper, a semi-automatic machine which produces a form letter at the press of a button.

Senator Clark goes on to explain how most of his letters are signed: "There is still another gadget widely used on Capitol Hill . . . My signature is reproduced, or forged if you will, to practically all my letters by a device known as an 'Autopen'—a wonderful product of automation which saves precious hours each week. There are three forged signatures. Most answers get the formal 'Joseph S. Clark.' Politicians who are not intimate get 'Joe Clark.' Friends get 'Joe' as do a fair number who are not friends but call me 'Joe' when they write."

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 15, 1961

Dear Dr. Kronovet:

The President has asked me to reply to your letter of April 20th and to apologize for the delay in this response.

During the national campaign the great volume of mail that was received by Senator Kennedy made it impossible for him to personally sign each and every letter. Therefore, much of the routine mail was processed through a machine which duplicated his authentic signature.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

*Kenneth O'Donnell*  
Kenneth O'Donnell

Special Assistant to the President

Dr. Milton Kronovet  
75 Ocean Avenue  
Brooklyn 25, New York

Enclosure

Above: Kenneth O'Donnell admits that Kennedy used a signature machine. (June, 1961)

Below: AP News Release in which Pierre Salinger is quoted as saying: "...there is no such machine." (December, 1962)

## JFK Uses Name-Signing Machine, Says Expert

By Associated Press

NEW YORK.—Is a machine signing letters for President Kennedy? A New York autograph dealer says yes. The White House says no.

A claim that the President's signature is being automated was made today on the NBC-TV "Today" program by Charles Hamilton. He has been an autograph collector for 37 years and a dealer for 10. He recently published a book on collecting signatures and manuscripts.

He said that for the first time in history a machine is being used to sign the President's name to official White House letters.

Hamilton said he saw nothing wrong with using such a device for routine letters, but that there might be grave consequences if used by an unauthorized person with access to White House stationery.

Hamilton said he was not implying that Kennedy used a machine to sign anything important, but that it was used to fill autograph requests and on letters of no great importance. He said he had found exam-

ples in which signatures from different letters could be superimposed, with one exactly matching the other. No person ever signs exactly the same way by hand each time, Hamilton said.

### 'Absolutely Untrue'

In Washington, Press Secretary Salinger said of Hamilton's claim: "Absolutely untrue, there is no such machine."

Salinger said Kennedy's name is duplicated on some of the thousands of photographs sent out in response to requests, but that President Eisenhower did the same thing.

He added that certain routine documents are signed for Kennedy by others who are authorized to do so.

### *The Famous "Buttonhook" Signature*



During his campaign for the Presidency Kennedy used a dozen or more form letters, adapted to answer the thousands of inquiries and proffers of support which poured in on him from every section of the country. His robot signed nearly every photograph and form letter. The "buttonhook" signature, which I have so named because the terminal "y" resembles a buttonhook, is by far the most abundant. Judging from the large numbers offered to me every week, many thousands of such form letters bearing this robot scrawl were mailed from his campaign headquarters.

Martin Wagner, a collector who wrote about the "buttonhook" signature to the President's private secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, received the usual "authentication" furnished by the White House.

To fulfill the requirements of the Autopen Company, manufacturer of the robot, Kennedy signed two signatures at the same time on an application form provided by the company. These two signatures, almost identical, are here considered a single robot signature. Examples I-A, I-B, and I-C are exactly the same; yet they differ slightly from examples I-D through I-K.

The authority-to-cut-signature form is illustrated on the same page as Robot Patterns II and III. (See page 15). It is probable that every robot signature exists in two slightly different variations. When to designate a variation as a new pattern has proved a problem. On the opposite page, because the buttonhook machine signature is so common, its two variants are considered as one pattern. But on page 15, to emphasize the fact that these variations exist, and to illustrate the difference more graphically, they are considered as separate patterns, designated Robot Patterns II and III.

*Robot Signature, Pattern I*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 17, 1961

Sincerely,

*John F. Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

I-D (October, 1960)

Dear Mr. Wagner:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 22nd.

The signature that you enclosed is the signature of the President. I am sorry that you felt that it was not his signature.

With kind regards.

Sincerely,

*Evelyn Lincoln*  
Evelyn Lincoln  
Personal Secretary to  
the President

Mr. Martin Wagner  
974 East 99th Street  
Brooklyn 36, New York

John F. Kennedy

I-E (December, 1960)

*John F. Kennedy*

I-F (1960)

*John F. Kennedy*

I-G (1960)

*John F. Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

I-H (August, 1960)

*John F. Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

I-J (November, 1960)

I-A (owned by Martin Wagner, with authenticating letter by Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln)

*John F. Kennedy*

Sincerely,  
*John F. Kennedy*

I-B (October, 1960)

I-C (1960)

I-K (no date)

*John F. Kennedy*

### *Deceptive Informal Signature*



Because Kennedy used his nickname, Jack, for Robot Signature Pattern II, many recipients believe he personally signed. It seems incredible that so informal a scrawl should be entrusted to an Autopen! This signature pattern was apparently used in the spring of 1960 and was probably abandoned because the matrixes, as sometimes happens, were accidentally chipped.

### *Reconstruction of Kennedy Signatures on a Form Provided by the Autopen Company*



The original form, signed by Kennedy and doubtless authorized by him, probably closely resembled this reconstruction, which illustrates the great similarity—yet minute difference—in signatures signed by the future-President at the same time. Because of the huge demand for his signature on letters and documents, Kennedy's robot was constantly at work. For this reason, Kennedy very probably ordered two matrixes at once, one from each signature, perhaps alternating them in use but more likely using one until it chipped, then using the second, almost identical pattern.

### *A Variant Robot Signature*



Strikingly similar to the preceding pattern, Robot Signature III is certainly from a second master signature written by Kennedy at the same time as the signature for Pattern II.

*Robot Signature, Pattern II*

Sincerely,  
*Jack Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

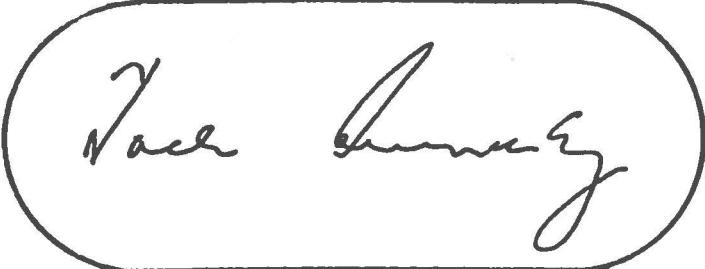
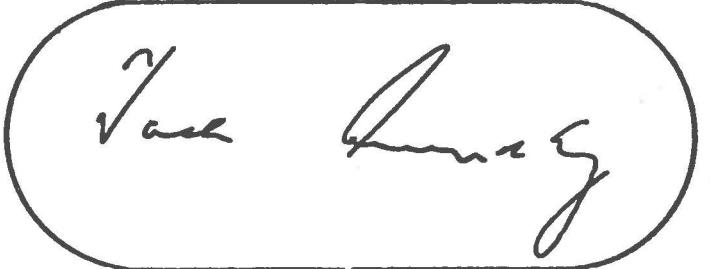
II-A (January, 1960)

Sincerely,  
*Jack Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

II-B (February, 1960)

Sincerely,  
*Jack Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

II-C (February, 1960)

	
First Choice No. <u>608</u> (We must have 2 signature samples)	Autopen Model No. <u>50</u>
Authorization to Cut Signature Recording:	
By - <u>Jack Kennedy</u> (Above Individual)	or By _____ (Dealer or Witness)
MAIL TO INTERNATIONAL AUTOPEN COMPANY Signature Division	

Reconstruction of Kennedy signatures on Autopen form

*Robot Signature, Pattern III*

Sincerely,  
*Jack Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

III-A (April, 1960)

Sincerely,  
*Jack Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

III-B (May, 1960)

*A "Master" Signature Probably Written by an Aide*



In this robot signature, Pattern IV, every letter is legible, a pedestrian and undistinguished chirography which bears little similarity to Kennedy's own virile hand, except for the feeble effort to imitate his capital "J."

*An Early Robot Signature*



In Robot Signature Pattern V (opposite), Kennedy's script, even in the writing of his last name, is extremely illegible. This signature appears on letters written in 1958 and apparently was not used during the Presidential campaign.

### Robot Signature, Pattern IV

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-A (July, 1960)

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-C (July, 1960)

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-E (August, 1960)

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-B (July, 1960)

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-D (August, 1960)

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV-F (November, 1960)

### Robot Signature, Pattern V

V-A (no date)

*John Kennedy*

V-D (no date)

*John Kennedy*

Sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

Sincerely yours,

*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

V-B (November, 1958)

V-E (July, 1958)

V-C (no date)

*John Kennedy*

## *The Robot at Work in the White House*



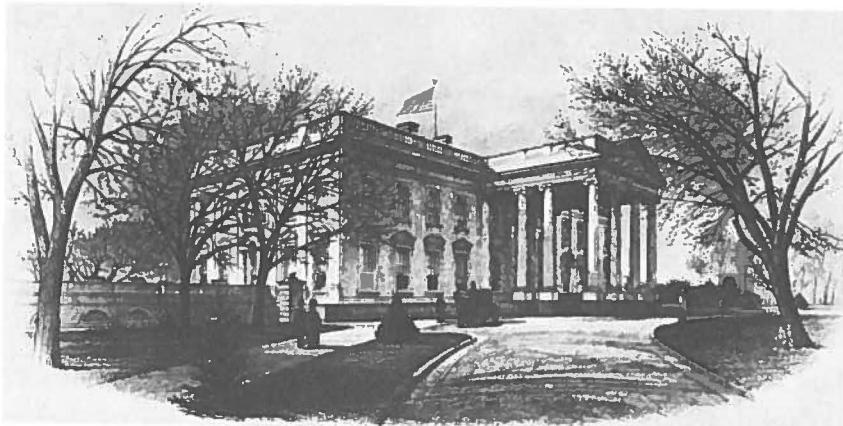
Since the administration of Chester A. Arthur (1881-85), it has been the custom of most Presidents selectively to distribute engraved views of the White House, personally signed. These two views of the White House, both signed as President, indicate that Kennedy's aides who denied the existence of the robot in the White House were mistaken.

When a sheet of paper is firmly fastened in the machine, the robot-pen will sign scores of signatures, all identical, in exactly the same place, so that they appear to be a single, very heavily penned signature. But from these two examples of a scarce pattern, it is clear that the operator did not firmly secure the White-House cards in the machine before activating the pen. Perhaps the cards were too small to fit conveniently under the securing bar, or perhaps the operator was in a hurry. Thus, although the component parts of each signature superimpose, the two signatures vary slightly because the cards were not held securely during the signing. Notice that, on one signature, the operator allowed the card to slip while the robot was placing the umbrella-like bar on top of the *J* in *John*.

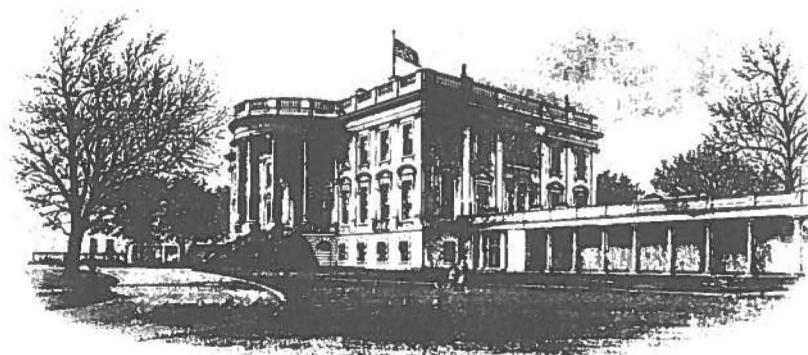
When I watched the machine at work, the operator obligingly showed me how even a mere sigh could affect a signature.

"You see," he observed, "I just drew a deep breath, and it was enough to change the signature. And if I don't secure the letter to be signed before I activate the machine, sometimes the signature is quite different, especially in the loops and curves. Even though I use this metal clamp to hold the paper down, I still have to steady each sheet with my hands."

*Robot Signature, Pattern VI*  
*(used as President)*

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "John Kennedy". The signature is fluid and expressive, with a large, sweeping loop on the right side.

VI-A (no date, but as President)

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "John Kennedy". The signature is fluid and expressive, with a large, sweeping loop on the right side.

VI-B (no date, but as President)

## 2 TO SIGN OR NOT TO SIGN: SOME PROXY SIGNATURES

**N**O DOUBT CAESAR HAD A SECRETARY who wrote and signed letters for him. Machiavelli did. So did other great leaders of the Renaissance. Napoleon's brevets were skillfully signed for him by Hugues Maret. And in modern times the "secretarial forgery" or "proxy signature" is so often used that it meets with universal acceptance. Franklin D. Roosevelt employed seven secretaries who signed his name adroitly; and his private secretary, Missy LeHand, even scrawled a bold *Franklin D. Roosevelt* on his personal checks.

All three of my secretaries imitate my signature with great facility and although I dictate a few of the scores of letters which go out over my signature every week, I sign not more than one or two a month.

However, when someone requests my autograph, I personally sign my name. To do otherwise, in my opinion, would be to perpetrate a fraud.

Obviously the enormous burden imposed by the office of President makes it impossible for the Chief Executive to comply with all the requests for autographs which reach him every day. During his terms of office, Eisenhower responded to autograph requests by sending a facsimile signature on a White-House card, with the word *facsimile* printed on the back. On rare occasions he signed personally as a special favor.

But Kennedy established for the first time in history a policy—I hope not a precedent!—of sending out proxy or robot autographs *not* so identified, and often with letters of authentication from his various aides.

On December 15, 1961 in an Associated Press release

Presidential press secretary Pierre Salinger vehemently denied the existence of a signature machine but added that "on some of the many Kennedy photographs sent out, Kennedy's name is duplicated . . . some routine documents are signed for Kennedy by authorized persons." Apparently the admission that documents were signed for him was disturbing to the President, for Salinger subsequently declared that "the only duplication of the President's signature authorized now is a facsimile (proxy) signature on some photographs of the President."

Adding to the contradictory statements issued by the President's aides, Mrs. Evelyn M. Lincoln, Kennedy's personal secretary, commented to reporters after his death:

"He always wondered why he couldn't sign all the photographs himself. He had no idea how much time it would take."

The public reaction to this candid admission that Kennedy had not personally inscribed his photographs must have jolted Mrs. Lincoln, for on February 19, 1964 in a second press interview, she covered the same subject, changing her story completely: ". . . every morning at about 8 o'clock, when he (Kennedy) got to his office, there was always a stack of photographs, nearly a foot high, for him to autograph.

"He never complained about doing that; he just got right on it, and by 9:30 or so, he would have them done."

If the President actually spent an hour and a half each day—amounting to at least one full day in every week—scribbling his name on photographs, he was certainly neglecting his responsibilities to the country.

However, I am inclined to think that most of the "inscribed" photographs of Kennedy as President will bear the imitations illustrated on the next four pages—those by Secretary I or Secretary II, easily identifiable because there is only a superficial resemblance to Kennedy's own signature.

## *The Most Common Secretarial Imitation as President*

N.Y.C.  
1968

Possibly executed by Lawrence O'Brien, but more likely by Priscilla Wear, these legal "forgeries" are remarkably consistent, almost as though they were signed by machine. At the top of the page are three authentic signatures of Kennedy as President which are imitated below in the eight examples by Secretary I. Because the proxy signatures end in what appears to be a "w" with a flourish under it, I have labelled the work of Secretary I as the "w" signature. It is extremely common and is found on most souvenir items as President, such as first-day covers, photographs, White-House cards, signed programs, books and similar items. Kennedy's middle initial resembles a capital A or a plus sign. The phrase "with best wishes" is well executed, but a comparison with the same phrase in Kennedy's hand—which may be seen in Chapter IV—reveals many differences.

As usual, many of these signatures bear official authentications. Signature I-D was sent out by Mrs. Lincoln, who wrote: "I am happy to enclose an autographed White-House card which comes with the President's cordial greetings."

Recently I saw a "w" signature accompanied by a letter of Larry O'Brien dated December 17, 1963 (more than three weeks after Kennedy's murder). O'Brien wrote: "Fortunately the late President Kennedy signed your etching before his passing . . ."

A comparison of Larry O'Brien's signature with some of the inscriptions (allegedly in the President's hand) which precede the "w" secretarial imitation shows many points of similarity.

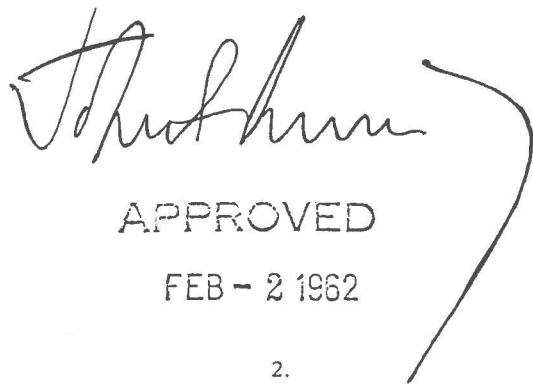
However, an eye-witness to some of the secretarial forgeries told me: "I was a close friend of Priscilla Wear, who worked in the office of the President. I used to watch her practice writing Kennedy's signature by the hour. Once she said to me, 'In heaven's name, don't ever tell anyone you saw me doing this!' Priscilla told me she was authorized to sign Kennedy's name to photographs and souvenir items, but not to White-House letters."

*Secretary I*

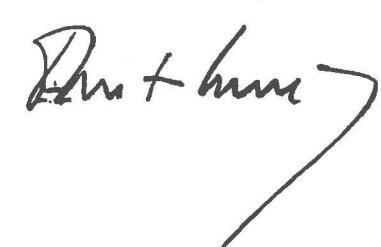
(with three authentic signatures for comparison)



1. (September, 1962)



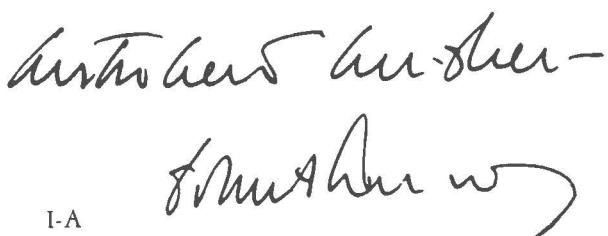
APPROVED  
FEB - 2 1962  
2.



3 (October, 1963)

Three official signatures as President, 1962-63

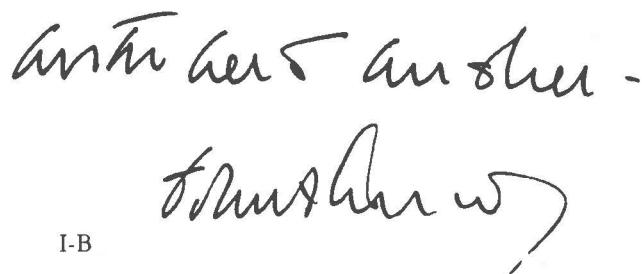
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



Arthur and another -  
John F. Kennedy

I-A

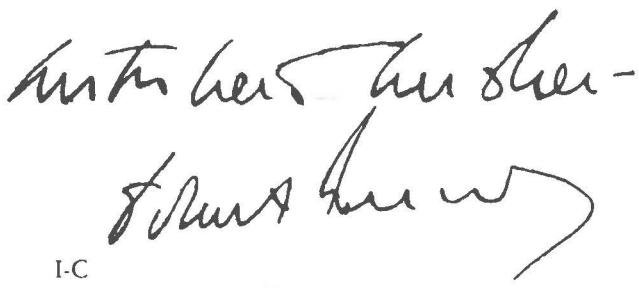
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



Arthur and another -  
John F. Kennedy

I-B

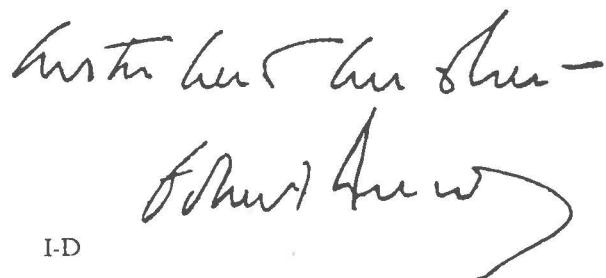
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



Arthur and another -  
John F. Kennedy

I-C

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



Arthur and another -  
John F. Kennedy

I-D

I-E



John F. Kennedy

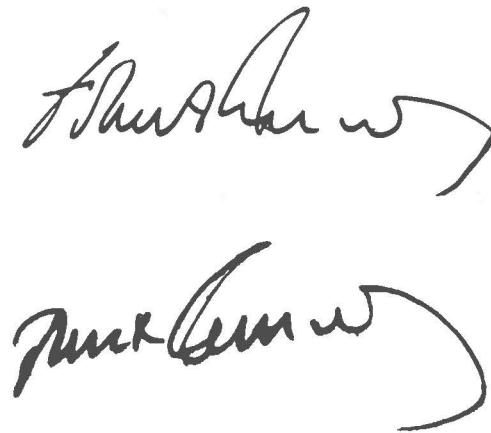
I-F

I-G



John F. Kennedy

I-H



John F. Kennedy

Imitation by Secretary I, based on the authentic examples illustrated above  
(all undated, but 1961-63)

### *The Comic "Lemming" Signature*



Perhaps the most amusing attempt to imitate President Kennedy's signature, an attempt which appears even on letters mailed from the White House, is by Secretary II, almost certainly Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln. At the top left is a very early example of Mrs. Lincoln's imitation of Kennedy's signature, so different that it shows no effort to mask her own script. Although the initials *JFK:el* appear next to the complimentary close of the letter, this marks a rare exception, for Kennedy employed many secretaries to sign his name—and they were not necessarily the same secretaries who typed the letters. The secretarial initials at the end of his letters cannot necessarily, therefore, be identified as those of the proxy signer.

Notice that, in example II-E, allegedly an inscription by Kennedy (and authenticated by Mrs. Lincoln) to Cornelius Greenway, the name *Cornelius Greenway* is obviously in the hand of Evelyn Lincoln. Compare the medial *n* in Lincoln with the medial *n* in Cornelius, and the *o* in Lincoln with the *o* in Cornelius, and the *l* in Evelyn with the *l* in Cornelius. A slight improvement in this secretarial fabrication occurs in the phrase "with best wishes," but it is less successful than the imitation of Secretary I.

Because of its amusing similarity to the name given to a certain fatalistic short-haired Arctic rodent, I have designated this inept imitation the "Lemming" signature.

*Secretary II*

Sincerely yours,

*John Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

II-A (April, 1956)

**United States Senate**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

September 7, 1960

Rev. C. Greenway, D.D.  
961 Ocean Avenue  
Brooklyn 26, N.Y.

Dear Rev. Greenway:

Sincerely yours,

*John Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

II-B (March, 1958)

Shortly before Senator Kennedy left Washington last week he signed the original cartoon which you forwarded to him. He wanted you to know that it was a pleasure for him to do this for you. It is being sent to you under separate cover.

Sincerely yours,

*John Kennedy*

John F. Kennedy

II-C (January, 1959)

Sincerely,

*Evelyn Lincoln*

Evelyn Lincoln  
Secretary to  
Senator Kennedy

II-E (transmittal)

With very best wishes  
*John Kennedy*

II-D (1959)

To  
Cornelius Greenway  
With very best wishes  
*John Kennedy*

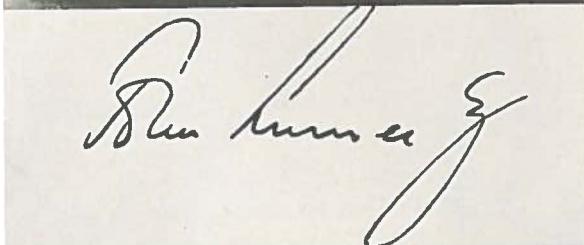
II-E (September, 1960)



*Photograph Signed for Kennedy by Secretary II*

The "Lemming" signature

(See preceding page)



*Photograph Signed for Kennedy by Secretary III*

The "stuttering" signature

(See following page)

*The Secretarial Signature that "Stutters"*



The signature of Secretary III (opposite) I call the stuttering signature because of its plainly visible *er*, traditional symbol of speech fumbling.

The *er* signature of Secretary III was apparently used only while Kennedy was in the Senate. The fourteen examples are arranged not chronologically but aesthetically and are set forth to give a composite picture of a secretarial imitation frequently used between 1956 and 1960.

Just as the fabrication of Secretary I is the most common as President, the proxy signature of Secretary III is the most abundant during the senatorial years. Hardly a day passes that some person desperately in need of money does not approach me with the hope of selling a letter signed with one of these proxy signatures. Often I have been asked as much as \$5,000 for such a valueless letter. The owners naturally believe that they possess an authentic letter of Kennedy, and if they query the aides of the former President they usually receive a letter of authentication.

*Secretary III*

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-A (August, 1957)

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-K (September, 1956)

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-L (June, 1960)

III-B (no date)

III-E (April, 1957)

John F. Kennedy *U.S.S.*

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-45102-2

III-F (February, 1957)

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-G (January, 1957)

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-M (no date)

III-C (no date)

Sincerely,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-H (January, 1959)

JOHN F. KENNEDY U. S. S.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-45102-2

III-N (June, 1959).

Sincerely,

*John F. Kennedy*

Sincerely,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-D (April, 1959)

Sincerely yours,

*John F. Kennedy*

III-J (May, 1957)

III-O (December, 1958)

## *A Galaxy of Proxy Signatures*



The eleven imitations on the opposite page bring to a total of fourteen the known secretarial imitations of Kennedy's signature, but they also suggest that there may be other proxy signers still undiscovered.

Most of these imitations are rather inept, especially IV, VII, and XIII. Number V was signed on a form letter (1952) to insurance agents. Number VI actually resembles Kennedy's signature on good behavior. Example IX, a lithographed signature used on a campaign form letter in 1960, appears to be a tracing of an authentic signature by Kennedy.

*Secretaries IV—XIV*

Sincerely yours,  
*John F. Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

IV (August, 1952)

Yours sincerely,

*John Kennedy*  
United States Senator

Sincerely,  
*John Kennedy*  
John F. Kennedy

V (October, 1952)

IX (1960)

*John F. Kennedy*

VI (no date)

X (May, 1961)

*John Kennedy*

XI (about 1960)

*John Kennedy*

VII (no date)

*John Kennedy*

XII (About 1961)

To dear [unclear]  
With best regards  
*John Kennedy*

VIII (no date)

With best regards  
*John Kennedy*

XIII (As President, 1963)

*John Kennedy*

### 3 FRANKLY SPEAKING: THE FRANKING SIGNATURES OF KENNEDY

HE LAST PRESIDENT TO ENJOY the franking privilege was U. S. Grant. On July 1, 1873, during Grant's second administration, Congress passed a law prohibiting the official use of the frank, later restoring it to senators and representatives but not to the President. Curiously, the Vice-President, in his capacity as president of the Senate, is allowed to free-frank his mail. But the President must use either penalty envelopes or regular postage stamps.

Those who seek franking signatures of the Presidents after Grant must usually content themselves with franks signed when the Chief Executive was an army officer (as Hayes and Garfield) ; or while he was in the Senate or House of Representatives (as Garfield, McKinley, Harding, Truman and L. B. Johnson) ; or while Vice-President (as Theodore Roosevelt, Coolidge, Truman and L. B. Johnson) ; or while ex-President (as Hoover and Truman, who were granted the privilege in 1958).

There exist, however, a few "fabricated" Presidential franks signed by special favor—one of Rutherford B. Hayes, two or three of Coolidge and perhaps half a dozen of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

To a collector-friend who asked him for his signature on the upper-right corner of a White-House envelope, F.D.R. replied angrily:

"You're asking me to break the law!"

Later, however, Roosevelt's temper cooled and he obliged his friend.

Like some of our other Presidents, including Kennedy and L. B. Johnson, who collects letters of Sam Houston, Roosevelt was an avid autograph collector. He knew that a "frank," especially by the President, who does not possess the franking privilege, was very valuable to collectors. It could also be used as a weapon in the hands of his political foes as a proof that the President broke the law.

As congressman and senator, Kennedy enjoyed the franking privilege. Much of the mail sent out during his term of office was posted under a printed frank. The original signature from which the cut was made undoubtedly was personally scrawled by the future-President.

Apparently no collector was far-sighted enough to ask Kennedy to frank an envelope with a pen-and-ink signature during the period when he was relatively unknown. And by the time collectors began to besiege him, he was so preoccupied with other and more important tasks that he delegated the autographing job to his secretaries. All of the pen-and-ink franks and souvenir covers which have come to my attention bear proxy signatures.

Of particular interest, both historically and philatelically, is the Presidential "frank" of Kennedy illustrated in this chapter. When it came into my possession I realized that the signature was the usual proxy signature almost invariably found on photographs, White-House cards and souvenir items mailed from the White House. But I was curious to know why the President would permit an illegal frank.

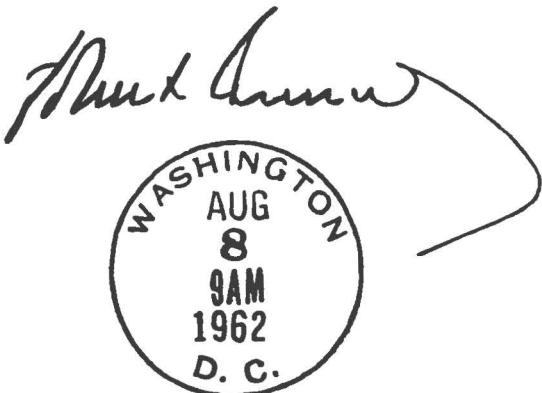
I queried Pierre Salinger, his press secretary, who replied that the envelope was *not* franked! In accordance with White-House policy, Salinger took the opportunity to

"authenticate" the signature, noting also that the cover bore "no official postal cancellation."

This last comment implied that the President had his own cancelling machine; and while I knew that Salinger was in error about the President having personally signed the cover, I was piqued by his comment that it was not officially cancelled. I wrote to the Postmaster of Washington, D. C., enclosing a photostat of the cancellation, and he resolved the matter by replying that it was an authentic cancellation "for philatelic purposes."

*An Alleged Presidential Frank*

THE WHITE HOUSE



VICTOR G. PHANEUF  
688 HIGH STREET  
HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS

Frank as President, by Secretary I

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 12, 1963

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

There is no official postal cancellation on the photostat you wrote about and the envelope is not franked. It was autographed by the President for the collector who requested it and sent to him inside another envelope.

The President has the same postal obligations as any other citizen. I cannot understand how you could possibly construe my letter to indicate that the President, or anyone else for that matter, could put a letter into a United States mailbox and take it back out. I certainly hope this settles this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "Pierre Salinger".

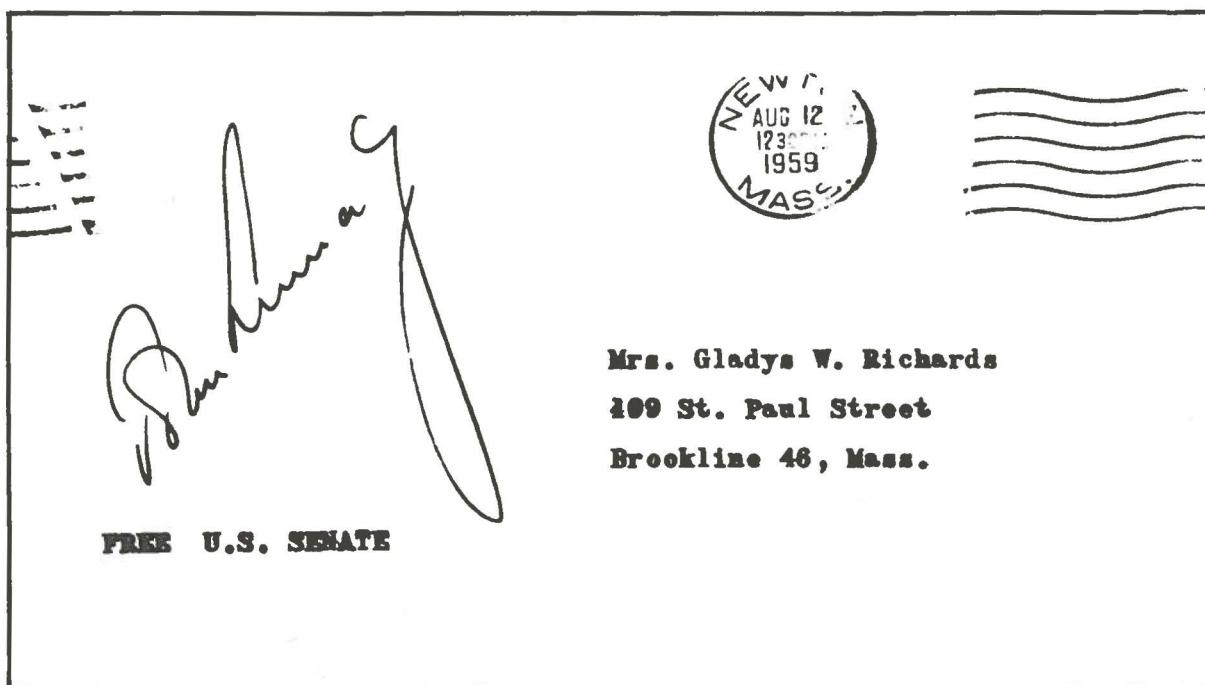
Pierre Salinger  
Press Secretary to  
the President

Letter of Salinger  
commenting on  
the alleged frank

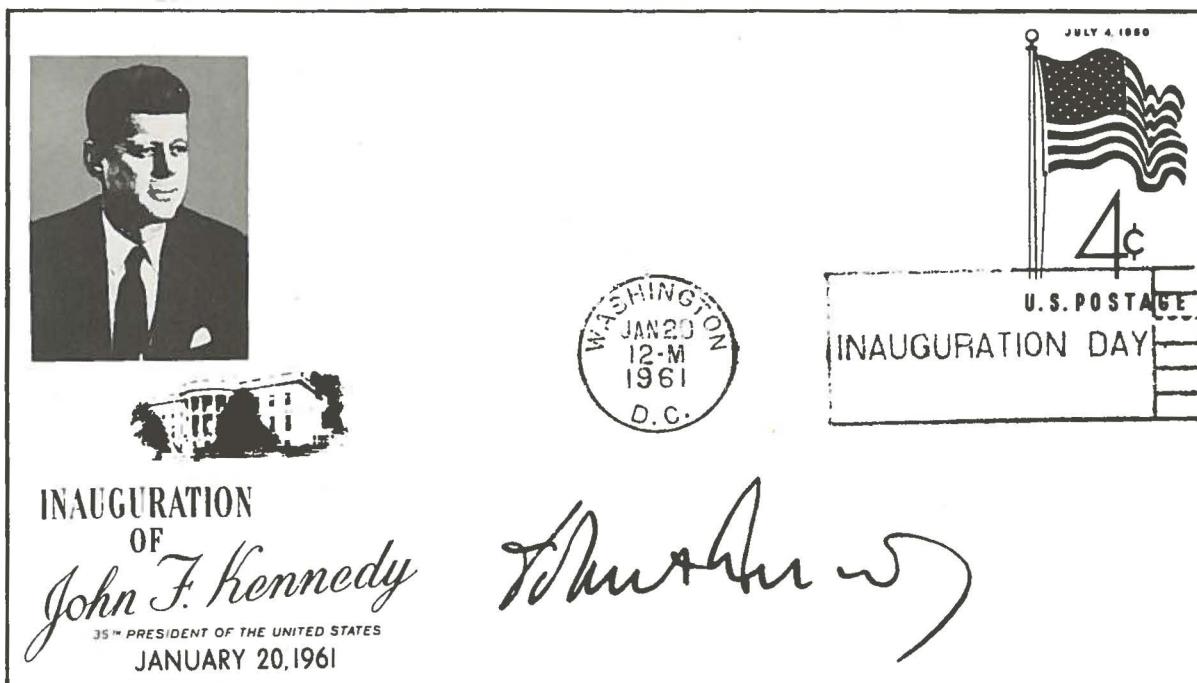
*Two Franking Signatures and a Souvenir Cover*



Printed frank as Senator



Frank as Senator, by Secretary III



Signed Presidential Cover, by Secretary I

## 4 FROM KENNEDY'S OWN INKWELL: AUTHENTIC SIGNATURES



JESTING HARVARD STUDENT once offered President Kennedy a free enrollment in a handwriting course!

Certainly Kennedy merits a place in America's Hall of Illegible Chirographers, along with Horace Greeley, of whom a wag once said, "If Belshazzar had seen Greeley's handwriting on the wall, he would have been a good deal more frightened than he was!"

There is a startling parallel between the mutinous scrawls of Kennedy and Napoleon, perhaps history's worst penman. Napoleon thus explained his bad writing to his aide, General Gourgaud:

"My ideas outspeed my pen—then goodbye to the letters and the lines."

Doubtless this was true of Kennedy, whose intellectual keenness and impetuosity are revealed in the speed with which he wrote, his words piling head-long across the page.

Both Napoleon and Kennedy varied their signatures from day to day. But here the chirographic parallel between the two great men ceases. Napoleon used a pen with difficulty, Kennedy with ease. The Man of Destiny was unable to turn out a legible script, even when he labored with the quill; Kennedy could, if he wished, sign his name with impeccable clarity.

As a boy, the future-President wrote a clear, rather undistinguished hand; but his impetuosity was even then evident.

A Plea for a raise  
by Jack Kennedy  
Dedicated to my  
Mr. J. P. Kennedy

Chapter I

My recent allowance is 40¢. This I used for acrobatics and other playthings of childhood but now I am a scout and I put away my child things. Before I would spend 20¢ of my 40¢ allowance and in five minutes I would have empty pocket and nothing to gain and 20¢ to lose. When I'm a scout I have to buy

canteens, bavaroises, blankets, searchlights, ponchos, things that will last for years and I can always use it while I can't use a chocolate marshmellower sundae with vanilla ice cream and so I put in my plea for a raise of thirty cents for me to buy scouts things and pay my own way more abund-

Francis

John Fitzgerald Francis  
Kennedy

Slightly reduced

Courtesy of Mrs. John F. Kennedy

### Boyhood Letter, Age about Ten

In this delightful early letter, a "plea for a raise" addressed to his father, cubscout Kennedy reveals an alert mind and an unusual skill in spelling. The boyish handwriting, soon to develop into a rapid-fire scrawl, is very easy to read. A few of the letters, especially the f, suggest the writing of his maturity. Notice that he has signed his full name, including the confirmation name Francis, which he later dropped.



Pear Jeff.

I finally got out of the infirmary and the doctor said that I did not have the mumps and the nurse admitted that it was doubtful if I had the disease that you referred. I heard that you had 116 girls at the dance. Choate had 135 and Choate has 6 forms and none of the lower forms brought any. We won't play you in baseball till next year.

We had a trackmeet yesterday and three school records were broken. The captain ran the hundred in 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  but it was not counted as official because the wind was with him. We had Prof. Seykly and Mr. Hyde last night. It was pretty good and they had a

Letter from The Choate School, Age about Fifteen  
(First Page)

A fascinating epistle to his friend Jeffery Roche, then at Lawrenceville. Notice that in the

good bedroom scene. School get out  
the eighth if you go Plan B or  
don't take College Board and then  
I'm going down to Cape Cod. The  
other nights a member of the Stu  
Council got me out on the track  
and had me running a mile &  $\frac{1}{2}$   
straight. He had some kind of a  
wire coat hanger and every time I  
slowed up he would  $\otimes$  smack me  
of on the tail. He was a track man  
and he went as fast as hell. I was  
so damned pooped that I could  
hardly walk the next day. It  
was at " at night. If you  
want to write Dugby write her  
care of American Express

Sincerely yours

Jack Kennedy  
writer

*The Development  
of Kennedy's Signature  
from Schoolboy to President*

*John Kennedy  
French*

*Mr. Proctor*

Student at Choate School (1934)

PRINT ALL PROPER  
NAMES PLAINLY

CLASS OF 1940

4A III-15.67 2a ✓

LEGAL NAME  
IN FULL  
(Do not use initials)

(Last name)

Kennedy, John Fitzgerald

(First name) (Middle name or names)

Home address in full 294 Parkfield Rd.  
Bronxville New York

Date of birth May 29, 1917 Place of birth Brookline

Is your father living? Yes Is your mother living? Yes

If your parents are separated, please so state

Father's full name, whether living or dead Joseph Patrick Kennedy

Give his address 30 Rockefeller Plaza

His business or profession Lawyer

Mother's full name before marriage Rose Fitzgerald

Her present address 294 Parkfield Rd - Bronxville N.Y.

Date of your admission to Harvard College June 1935

School from which you were admitted to Harvard College The Choate School

Address of School Wallingford Conn.

Name, address, and relationship of person to whom communications should be sent concerning your college work Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy - Parent

SEE OVER 30 Rockefeller Plaza - N.Y.C.Y-N.Y.

Personnel card, admission to Harvard

*Jack Kennedy*

As Author of "Why England Slept" (August, 1940)

*John F. Kennedy  
Lt.(jg) USNR.*

As ex-Commander of P.T. 109 (October, 1943)

*John Kennedy*

As Congressman (1952)

*John Kennedy*

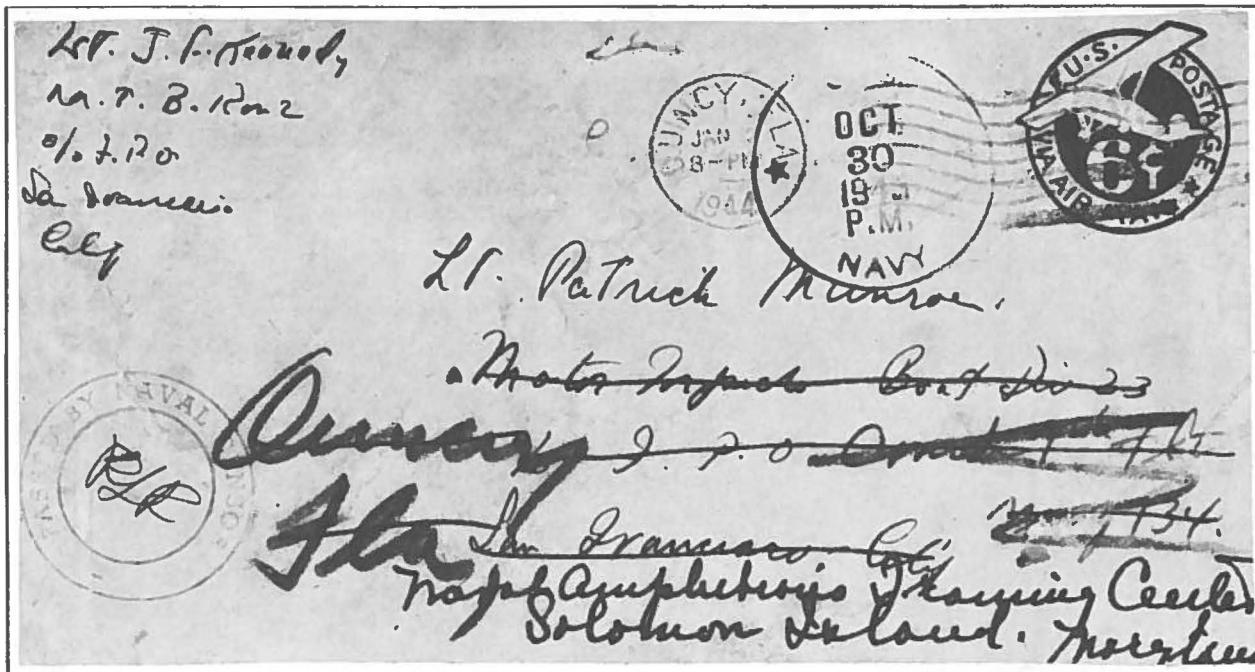
As Senator (1960)

As President (1962)

In the first example (previous page) penned at Choate School in 1934, notice that Kennedy has signed his name with the bold egotism of youth; but when he wrote the Roman numeral IV he scrawled it so rapidly that the pen did not leave the page while making the top and bottom crossbars.

It is amusing to note that in his application for registration to Harvard (previous page) Kennedy misspelled the name of the man who was to be one of his leading political foes, Rockefeller. The error was corrected by a clerk in the registrar's office.

As an officer in the Navy Kennedy developed the swift, almost tumultuous script which characterizes his later writing; but the words at this earlier period were more legible and the signature could easily be deciphered.



Cover Addressed and Signed as Lieutenant  
(October, 1943)

*"Let's Flip a Coin!"*

These four words decided whether Lieutenant Patrick Munroe, commander of P-T Boat 110, or Lieutenant John F. Kennedy, commander of P-T Boat 109, would take the dangerous assignment in New Guinea waters. Both were eager for the hazardous mission.

Lieutenant Kennedy won the toss.

After his vessel was rammed and sunk (later Lieutenant Munroe also lost his boat), Kennedy wrote to his comrade (the last page of his letter is pictured on the next page), noting of his exploit:

*"We were extremely lucky throughout."*

And he ended his letter, one of the few extant from this early period, with the traditional:

*"Over & out, Jack."*

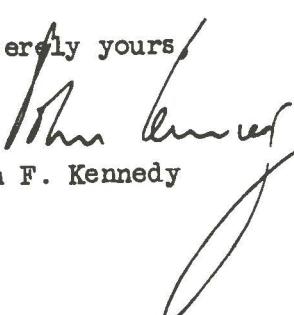
That's about all the coral Pat,  
except that stupid arsebag Kelly & the  
big popular figure these days - having done an  
extremely good job - and putting himself out  
in front plenty.

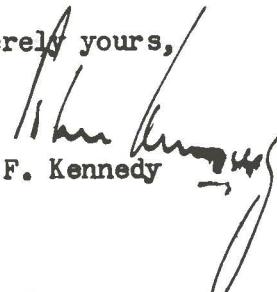
Thanks for your good wishes.  
Our rescue. We were extremely lucky  
throughout. After today it won't happen  
again. Working at 7c author base - & went  
in to see the doc about some coral  
injections I got. He asked me how I got  
them - I said swimming - he  
then burst loose with - "I mean - you  
know swimming is forbidden in ~~the~~  
~~the~~ this area - stay out of the  
god-damned water." So now its an official  
order - so we move ashore. But regards  
to Sted - Red - and all the boys - Remember  
me to Mac if you see him.

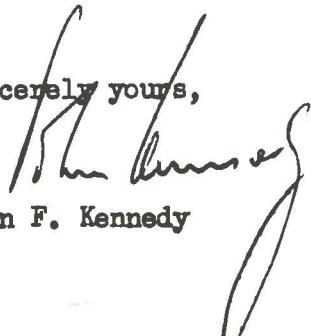
Over and

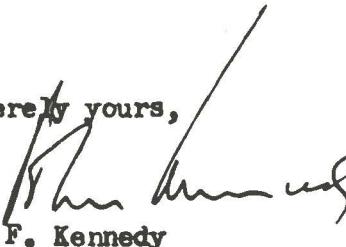
Jack.

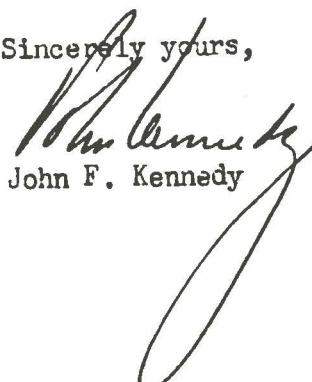
By the time he entered Congress the future-President had evolved the eccentricities of penmanship which make his constantly varying signature the most amazing and perplexing of any in American history. The five signatures reproduced here, all signed within a period of five months in 1953, illustrate the lack of consistency in his writing. Yet there is a striking similarity between them—a similarity which was to vanish during the years in which Kennedy was moving toward the Presidency.

Sincerely yours,  
  
John F. Kennedy

Sincerely yours,  
  
John F. Kennedy

Sincerely yours,  
  
John F. Kennedy

Sincerely yours,  
  
John F. Kennedy

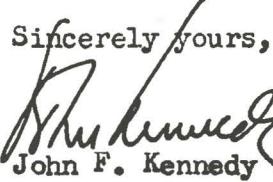
Sincerely yours,  
  
John F. Kennedy

*As Congressman  
Authentic Signatures (February to June, 1953)*

After 1953, Kennedy signed  
very few letters personally

As Congressman

Sincerely yours,

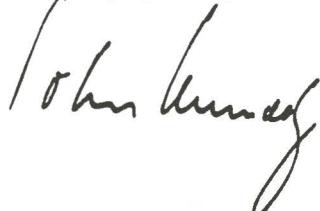
  
John F. Kennedy

(October, 1950)



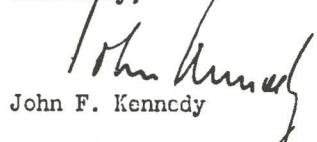
(1952)

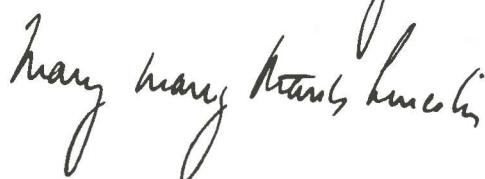
Sincerely yours,



(June, 1952)

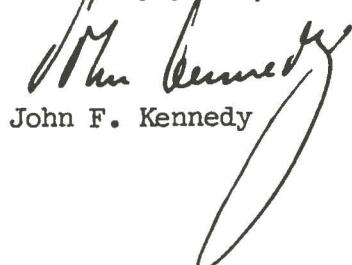
Sincerely,

  
John F. Kennedy

  
many many thanks much

(November, 1952)

Sincerely yours,

  
John F. Kennedy

(no date)

As Senator

With the highest  
regards and esteem  
of his friend -  
John Kennedy

(January, 1958)

John:  
Would you care  
have lunch on

Wednesday / June  
Revolutionary 1<sup>st</sup> -

J.K.

(January, 1958)

John Kennedy  
U.S. Senator

(no date)

John Kennedy

(1960)

John Kennedy  
U.S. Senator

(no date)

From the Desk of  
HON. JOHN F. KENNEDY

~~Commission~~ ~~Commission~~  
~~Commission~~ ~~Commission~~  
John F. Kennedy  
January 1958

(no date)

JOHN F. KENNEDY  
MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEES:  
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Dear Andy:

Congratulations! I don't know how

you do it. Running in

one of the most adored

political cities in the

country - you won every  
year. I find the prospect

of one was sufficient

towards difficult things.

I hope to see you  
before the time to recess comes

Respectfully yours

JFK

Holograph Letter of Kennedy as Senator

*Presentation Inscriptions in Books*  
*Written by John F. Kennedy*

To my former boss  
from Republic -  
With warmer regards  
John Kennedy

Inscription of Kennedy in a copy  
of "Profiles In Courage"

To John Bond -

With esteem and

many good wishes

John F. Kennedy  
(1958)

Inscription of Kennedy in a copy  
of "As We Remember Joe"



*Kennedy Signing a Copy of  
As We Remember Joe for John Bond,*

(The inscription is  
reproduced on the preceding page.)

By 1954 Kennedy had almost ceased to sign his personal mail, delegating the task to various secretaries. And just as they took from the ambitious young senator the burden of scribbling his name, so they were in large measure to be relieved a few years later by the robot which adroitly reproduced Kennedy's personal scrawl.

The authentic signatures of Kennedy from 1954 until his murder in 1963 represent a decade in which his signature varied so greatly from day to day, even from hour to hour, according to the circumstances under which he was writing, that it is sometimes difficult even for an expert to authenticate them.

Yet despite their many differences, the signatures of Kennedy have one thing in common—they vary! The hasty scrawl of the President on a banquet program for one of

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "John Kennedy". The signature is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

Signature signed at a banquet, 1960

several hundred guests who have lined up for his autograph might not be so legible as the signature set to an important document in the quiet of his study earlier in the same day; but this very lack of consistency sets the genuine signatures apart from the proxy and machine signatures!

Above all, one detects in the authentic signatures a feeling of urgency, almost as though Kennedy sensed that the important work must be got out fast, before time ran out. A mere pen lashing at the bottom of a letter sufficed him. He had signed it—that was enough! What did it matter if a few letters were added or subtracted from his signature? What difference if he blotted, or signed *Jack* instead of *John*?

It was, after all—however he wrote it or spelled it—a signature which will never be forgotten.

*Informal Notes on Dictated Letters*

Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy

Sincerely,

Yours was  
about the recent  
letter we have received  
since being in  
the White...

All so here  
to day you the  
few days

Sincerely,

FDR.

JFK:jd

I hope to see you  
sometime after the  
first of the year —  
Rutherford B. Hayes

Kennedy often jotted postscripts on letters to friends.  
*Above, left:* April 20, 1962 (as President), to Mrs. Emily Chamberlain of New York; *above, right:* July 13, 1956, to the Associate Editor of the American Weekly; *below:* November 29, 1959, to Andrew P. Quigley.

*Kennedy introducing Adlai E.  
Stevenson, with the nomination  
written out and signed, about 1957*



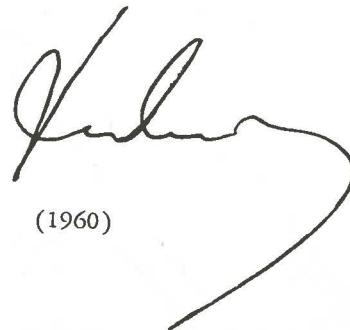
"It is with pleasure to present to the  
Senate the nomination of Adlai E.  
Stevenson to be Vice President of the  
United States. I do this with much  
confidence in his character and his  
ability to serve our country. His  
experience in the free institutions of  
the United States will allow him to  
make an important contribution to  
the welfare of the nation. He has  
given to the many men he has met in  
his travels a sense of the importance  
of democracy and the need for  
international cooperation. He is a  
man of great ability and a true  
representative of the United States."

*Campaigner for the Presidency  
and President-Elect*

I would be glad to hear  
from you on any matter-  
at any time?

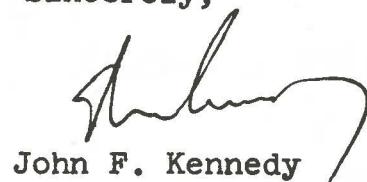
John F. Kennedy

(February, 1961)



(1960)

Sincerely,

  
John F. Kennedy

(December, 1960)



(1960)

As President

J. D. K.

(no date)

Approved October 8<sup>th</sup> 1963  
the White House  
was built for  
the States of  
John F. Kennedy  
Digger and  
11:35 AM

(October, 1963)

Approved: John F. Kennedy  
(no date) (October, 1961)  
Approved: John F. Kennedy  
March 1961  
(1962) (October, 1963) (March, 1961)

Sincerely,

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

(May, 1963)

Mr. the best wishes  
John F. Kennedy

(no date; official facsimile)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 1961

Dear Sirs:

I want to  
express my thanks to  
you for your work on  
the Committee. It was a  
fine job.

Yours,  
John F. Kennedy

Holograph Letter of Kennedy as President

## 5 A POSTSCRIPT ON JACQUELINE KENNEDY



HERE IS IN JACQUELINE BOUVIER KENNEDY'S graceful script all the refinement and beauty one might expect from the writing of a distinguished lady. The legible, print-like letters, formed rapidly yet with delicacy, reflect impeccable taste and originality. In some ways her handsome, cursive hand recalls, without actually resembling, that of Queen Elizabeth, whose writing master, Roger Ascham, schooled his pupil in the beautiful Italic script of the Renaissance.

Unlike many important personalities, Mrs. Kennedy has put warmth and personality into her correspondence. Until her husband became a candidate for President she continued to indite letters in her striking chirography. When at last she yielded to the enormous demands of her position, she followed Kennedy's policy and authorized a secretary to sign photographs and letters for her.

Among the fascinating letters of Mrs. Kennedy which have come my way was the letter to Ronald C. Munro of England, who had asked her for \$20,000. Her four-page reply, a tender and moving epistle, fetched \$3,000 at auction—the highest sum ever paid at public sale for a letter of a living person.

The last paragraph of this famous letter is reproduced here, together with a secretarial signature which often appears on letters and photographs after 1958.

In the authentic script of Mrs. Kennedy, notice that the *n*'s in the signature look like *t*'s. The proxy signature is much more legible and lacks the spontaneity and grace of its model.

Conclusion of a Holograph  
Letter by Jacqueline Kennedy

I pray that things will work  
out for you - as I said - I would have  
helped you if I could - I hate to put  
an end to your dream - but I think you  
were hoping for a miracle that just won't  
happen in the twentieth century -

May you and your family stay as happy  
as you are with each other - and I am sure  
God will be kind to you

Very sincerely  
Jacqueline Kennedy

With best wishes  
Jacqueline Kennedy

*Inscription and Signature  
Signed for Mrs. Kennedy  
by a Secretary*

## EPILOGUE



ALTHOUGH THE ROBOT WHICH SERVED KENNEDY so faithfully quickly switched its allegiance to another member of the Kennedy family, there is one secretary (Secretary XIII) who for reasons unknown and for an employer unidentified continues to sign the martyred President's name even a year after his death. Since this volume was completed, I have encountered at least half a dozen signatures like the one illustrated here, all with very similar letters of explanation from former aides of Kennedy.

*Evelyn Lincoln*

November 17, 1964

Dear Mr. Burgdorf:

In cataloging the late President Kennedy's papers, I have just discovered your letter and its enclosures and am delighted to find that they were signed -- apparently only a few days before his tragic passing. I am deeply sorry that this could not come to you earlier.

Sincerely,

*Evelyn Lincoln*

Evelyn Lincoln

Posthumous signature of Kennedy  
by Secretary XIII, with letter of  
transmittal by Evelyn Lincoln

Mr. Karl Burgdorf  
Postlagernd/Dompost  
Hildesheim  
Germany

Enclosures



*R. Linn*



Karl Burgdorf  
Hildesheim  
Butterborn 68

## A FEW WORDS OF THANKS



O ALL THE DEALERS, HISTORIANS, AND COLLECTORS who so enthusiastically participated in this venture, I should like to express my deepest thanks. No enterprise ever received more cordial aid!

First I should like to record my gratitude to the colleagues who generously allowed me the use of their files. Among these are the distinguished experts, Mary A. Benjamin of New York and Paul C. Richards of Brookline, both of whom gave liberally of their time and ideas, and even volunteered to read the manuscript (which would surely have been much better for their comments, had not time and the printer stood in the way); Dr. Milton Kronovet of Brooklyn, a pioneer in the study of Kennedy's signature, who allowed me to reproduce, not just autographs from his collection, but even an important letter of Kenneth O'Donnell written to him; and Robert K. Black of Upper Montclair, New Jersey, who without reservation placed at my disposal every autograph of Kennedy that came his way.

Few authors have enjoyed such cooperation as was offered me by the outstanding collectors of Kennedyana. Dr. Bernard Pacella permitted me to reproduce several valuable items, including an excessively rare holograph of Kennedy as President; Andrew P. Quigley was no less generous, offering whatever I wished to use from his splendid personal collection of authentic letters; and Patrick Munroe, close friend of Kennedy during World War II, allowed me to publish in facsimile the envelope and last page of an unique letter written to him in 1943 by the future-President.

Jeffrey Roche, of New York, close boyhood friend of Kennedy, generously allowed me to print in full a remarkable letter written to him in 1932; and Roger Butterfield,

also of New York, kindly brought to my attention a significant passage about the Autopen by Senator Joseph S. Clark.

I am grateful to Mrs. John F. Kennedy who graciously permitted me to reproduce the very touching early letter of Kennedy to his father.

Others who furnished facsimiles were Clifford Barrett, Kayo Roy, H. Keith Thompson, and Martin Wagner, who also granted me permission to reproduce a letter to him from Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln.

Especially I should like to thank Henry A. Wihnyk, who put in much time and effort in the hope of clearing up some of the mysteries surrounding Kennedy's signature, and who cheerfully allowed me the use of his personal collection; and my friend, the Reverend Cornelius Greenway, pastor of the All Souls Church in Brooklyn, who placed at my disposal, without reservations or conditions, his enormous collection of signed photographs of Kennedy, certainly the finest and most important in existence.

Of great help was the information furnished by Justin G. Turner of Los Angeles, who telephoned me twice from Washington, D. C. to give me details about the Autopen used by Kennedy; and David C. Mearns, Manuscript Librarian of Congress, who furnished valuable leads for uncovering data about Kennedy's robot.

Particularly I should like to set down my thanks to the libraries which so generously helped: Harvard University, The National Archives, and the Library of Congress. What historical book could ever be finished without their aid?

My debt to H. Keith Thompson, who labored incessantly to put into print a most recalcitrant manuscript, exceeds even that of an author to a helpful publisher.

Finally (and the last shall be first!) I should like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Diane Brooks Hamilton, who worked tirelessly with me, night after night, to put together the jigsaw puzzle of Kennedy's handwriting. Although this book is dedicated to her, it might be even more appropriate to call her the co-author.

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This book was designed by Charles Hamilton and Diane  
Hamilton and printed in 14-point Benedictine by H. Keith  
Thompson at Cooper Forms in New York City.



DUE DATE

MAY 18 1966

*[Signature]*

OCT 25 1996

~~9/18/96~~

SEP 19 1997

*653262*

SEP 23 1997

*12/1/02*

LIBRARY  
COLLEGE  
AMHERST

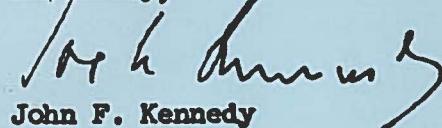
Robot Signature, Pattern VII

x973.8

K383  
H

Robot Signature, Pattern VII  
(a recent discovery)

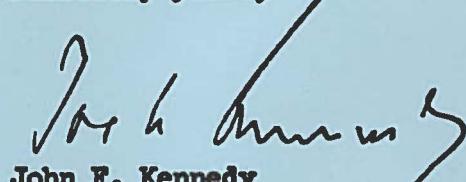
Sincerely,



John F. Kennedy

VII-A (June 25, 1959)

Sincerely yours,



John F. Kennedy

VII-B (July 9, 1959)

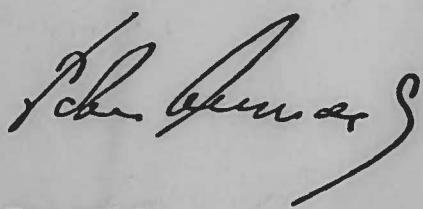
Based upon an authentic example furnished by Kennedy, this automated signature is so adroitly scrawled that it can be identified as a machine product only when compared with another signature of the same robot pattern. It was discovered by the author after this volume was printed and suggests that there are other machine and secretarial signatures which remain to be identified.

Nearly every week brings fresh confirmation of the preliminary data presented in this book. At press time, for instance, only two examples of Robot Signature Number VI were known; but since then more than a dozen additional examples have come to light.

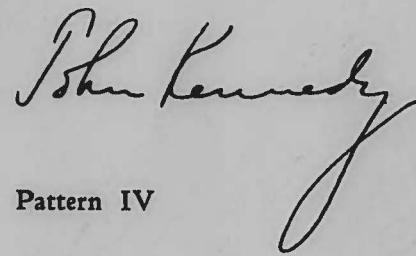
If I have made mistakes and omissions in this pioneer probe, I hope that my efforts will nevertheless make the task of identifying these robot signatures easier for future scholars and historians. Little is known yet about the transfer of man's functions to the oiled gears of a machine, and no doubt a hundred years from now what I have written will seem naive. Perhaps the identity of mankind will then be submerged in new and even more frightening mechanisms.

## SEVEN ROBOT SIGNATURES

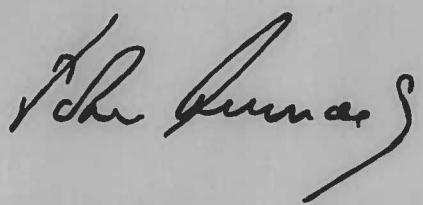
To see the similarities and differences in each of the robot signatures used by Kennedy, place each signature over the examples of the same pattern.



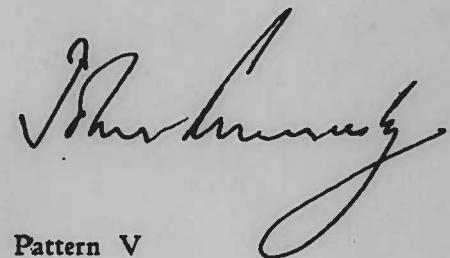
Pattern I-A



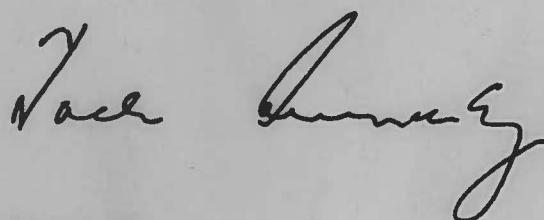
Pattern IV



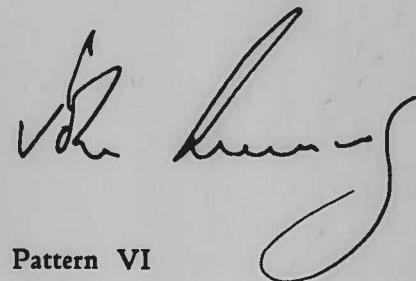
Pattern I-D



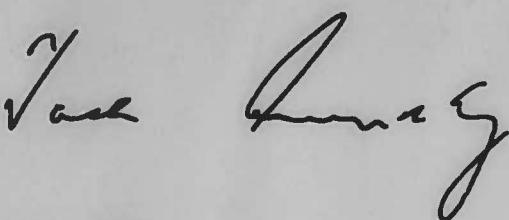
Pattern V



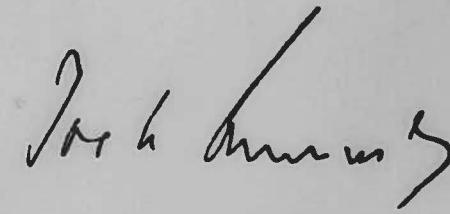
Pattern II



Pattern VI



Pattern III



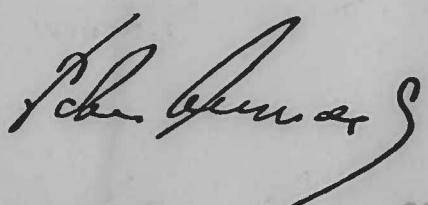
Pattern VII



Robot Signature, Pattern VII  
(a recent discovery)  
SEVEN ROBOT SIGNATURES

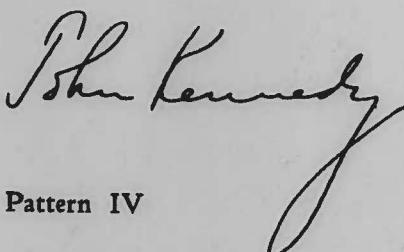
To see the similarities and differences in each of the robot signatures used by Kennedy, place each signature over the examples of the same pattern.

John F. Kennedy



Pattern I-A

VII-A (June 25, 1959)

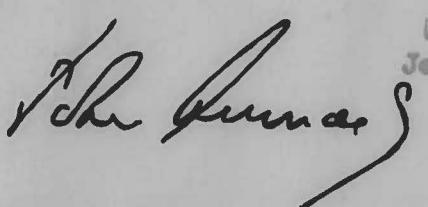


Pattern IV

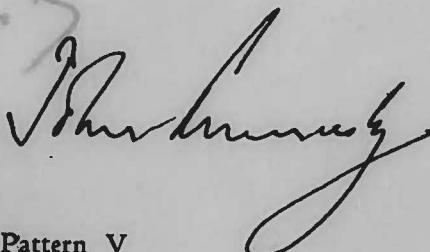
Sincerely yours,

John F. Kennedy

VII-B (July 9, 1959)



Pattern I-D

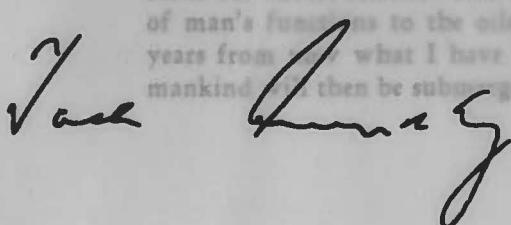


Pattern V

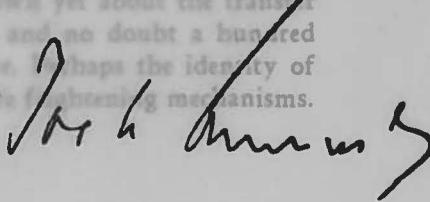
Based upon an authentic signature furnished by Kennedy, this assumed signature is so poorly done that it can be identified as a machine product only when compared with the signature of the same robot pattern. It was discovered in the course of this volume was printed to suggest that there are other machine signatures which resemble the human variety.

Nearly every robot has confirmation of the preliminary data presented in this book. In one case, for instance, only two examples of Robot Signature Number V were known; but since then many additional examples have come to light.

If I have made mistakes and omissions in this pioneer probe, I hope that my efforts will nevertheless make the task of identifying these robot signatures easier for future scholars and historians. Little is known yet about the transfer of man's functions to the cold gears of a machine, and no doubt a hundred years from now what I have written will seem naive. Perhaps the identity of mankind will then be submerged in new and even more frightening mechanisms.



Pattern III



Pattern VII

