

## 60 Years After JFK: The Worldwide Thalidomide Drug Scandal is Finally Getting a Feature Film



**Los Angeles, California Oct 20, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com))** - *The movie, Pharma, will shine a light on the incredible true story of Dr. Frances "Frankie" Kelsey's fight to keep thalidomide from being approved for the US market despite immense pressure from the FDA. Shortly before his tragic death, President John F. Kennedy awarded her the greatest civilian presidential award for her work.*

60 years ago this month, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The world overall, and the United States in particular, has changed drastically from his time in office six decades ago. While President Kennedy guided the US through many historic crises during his short tenure, one of the most enduring was the worldwide thalidomide drug tragedy.

Popular sentiment is that the drug that caused birth defects around the world never came to the US. In fact, more than 2.5 million pills were given to pregnant women for morning sickness by their doctors - despite it never being approved by the FDA. Although President Kennedy made the unprecedented decision to order and publicly announce a search and destroy mission for the drug in 1962, many of the pill bottles were unlabeled and remained in circulation.

Dr. Frances Kelsey, a medical officer who reviewed the drug at the FDA, played a key role in keeping thalidomide from being approved for the US market. President Kennedy went on to bestow upon her the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service - the highest award achievable by a civilian. Despite being responsible for saving thousands of lives and writing the clinical trial process utilized worldwide, Dr. Kelsey's work and the thalidomide tragedy are unknown to many Americans.

The ramifications of this historical event still linger today. It's estimated that over 10,000 babies were affected by the thalidomide drug worldwide and around 500 remaining survivors are living in the US. To date, survivors of thalidomide in the US have not received any recognition or restitution.

There is no question that JFK's assassination 60 years ago changed the course of US history. Had he remained in office, it is possible that our drug regulatory system would look very different today and that more people would know about the thalidomide tragedy, the survivors, and the lasting impact of Dr. Kelsey's work. Though what could have been will never be known, [Pharma](#) brings hope that the truth will be told and justice will be served, even if it takes 60 years. Thalidomide survivor, Glenda Johnson, believes it will. "We're the forgotten. We don't exist. We've struggled on a daily basis since day one. I believe that the movie will make a difference. I hope and pray that someone sees *Pharma* and our stories and they reach out to help us get justice."

Crowdfunding for the full-length motion picture is now [live](#). With over \$600k raised so far and a goal of \$2M, production for the feature film, *Pharma*, is anticipated to begin in early 2024. To find out more, go to [www.pharmathemovie.com](http://www.pharmathemovie.com).

The crowdfunding campaign for the feature film, *Pharma*, can be found here:  
<https://wefunder.com/frankiesstoryllc/>

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