

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

# Memorandum

TO : File

DATE: November 22, 1966

FROM : *WLB* Carl W. Belcher, Chief  
General Crimes Section  
Criminal Division

SUBJECT: Discussions with Naval Medical  
Staff participating in the  
Autopsy upon the body of the  
Late President John F. Kennedy

I was present in Room 200-A of the National Archives Building, 8th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C., at approximately 2:00 p.m. on November 1, 1966, when James J. Humes, Captain, M.C., USN, Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, Captain, M.C., USN retired, John H. Ebersole, Captain, M.C., USN, and Mr. John T. Stringer, Photographer, Navy Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, began an inspection of x-ray and photographic items which were represented to us by Dr. James B. Rhoads, Deputy Archivist of the United States, to be the material listed in Appendix B of a letter dated October 29, 1966 from Burke Marshall, representing the executors of the estate of John F. Kennedy, to Honorable Lawson B. Knott, Jr., Administrator of General Services. In addition to Dr. James B. Rhoads, Deputy Archivist of the United States, Marion Johnson of the staff of the National Archives and Miss Patricia Eve Walkling, Mr. Rhoads' stenographer, were also present.

In the course of the inspection of the x-ray and photographic items I noticed that Captain Humes had in his possession a torn scrap of paper upon which there were handwritten notes and that in evaluating groups of items he seemed to refer to this handwritten note as if verifying to himself the total of the items which had been counted into particular groups.

On November 4, 1966, I was in Captain Humes' office at the Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, and asked him about the handwritten note. Captain Humes told me that prior to his going to the National Archives on November 1, 1966, he had made the handwritten note from information he gained from three documents then in the office of the Admiral in Charge of the Naval Medical Center. At my request Captain Humes obtained the three documents and showed them to me. The two memorandums dated November 22, 1963, appeared to be carbon copies of originals and

the letter dated December 5, 1963, appeared to be an original. At my request Mr. Stringer made a negative and two prints of these three documents. The negatives and the prints are attached. The documents which Mr. Stringer photographed were returned to Captain Humes, who stated that he would thereafter return the documents to the office of the Admiral in Charge.

In explaining these documents to me, Captain Humes stated that the information contained in the documents (two memorandums dated November 22, 1963 and one letter dated December 5, 1963) pertain to only the x-ray pictures and photographic pictures of the body of the late President Kennedy and did not pertain to photographic pictures taken of the brain after the brain had been separated from the body of the late President.

Captain Humes stated that all photographs taken of the brain (separated from the body) were taken after November 22, 1963. These pictures of the brain were delivered by Captain Humes personally to Vice Admiral George G. Burkley. No count was made of the number of photographs delivered and there was no exchange of receipts between Captain Humes and Vice Admiral Burkley to record this delivery. Captain Humes stated his belief that all the items which he did deliver to Vice Admiral Burkley were inspected on November 1, 1966, and were then present at the National Archives. These items were numbered on November 1, 1966 as photographic items 19 through 25, inclusive, and 46, 47, 48, 50, 51 and 52.

Captain Humes further stated that on the night of November 22, 1963, the Secret Service took from the Naval Medical staff at the autopsy all of the x-ray and photographic items depicting the body of the late President. He stated that the following day, November 23, 1963, he learned that Captain J. T. Stover, Jr., M.C., USN, had prepared and signed the memorandum of November 22, 1963 (attached) to Roy H. Kellerman indicating that eleven graphic film holders containing sixteen sheets of exposed ektachrome film, nine graphic film holders containing twelve sheets of exposed black and white film, and one roll of exposed 120 ektachrome film had been delivered to Mr. Kellerman. Also on November 23, 1963, Captain Humes learned that John H. Ebersole had

prepared a similar memorandum dated November 22, 1963, to Roy H. Kellerman indicating that Mr. Kellerman had received a total of fourteen items of x-ray film. Sometime after December 5, 1963, Captain Humes became aware that the December 5, 1963 letter from Robert I. Bouck indicated that there were actually twenty-one sheets of ektachrome film and eighteen sheets of black and white film delivered to the Secret Service.

Captain Humes stated that the fourteen items of x-ray film shown in the November 22, 1963 memorandum of John H. Ebersole were inspected at the National Archives on November 1, 1966 and numbered as x-ray items 1 through 14, inclusive.

Captain Humes stated the eighteen sheets of black and white film described in the December 5, 1963 letter were inspected at the National Archives on November 1, 1966 and numbered as photographic items 1 through 18, inclusive.

Captain Humes stated that the twenty-one items of ektachrome film mentioned in the December 5, 1963 letter were also present in the National Archives Building but that only twenty of these items contained an image. These twenty images were numbered on November 1, 1966, as photographic items 26 through 45, inclusive. Captain Humes felt that the item listed in the National Archives as "miscellaneous item #3" was to be counted for the purpose of making valid the total of twenty-one shown in the December 5, 1963 letter. He based this upon his belief that all eleven graphic film holders were completely filled with ektachrome when delivered to the Secret Service and stated his belief that the representations as to the amount of ektachrome which had been exposed contained in the November 22, 1963 memorandum of Captain Stover was an estimate and could not have been more than an estimate because the ektachrome had not been developed at the time of the estimate. Eleven graphic film holders contain twenty-two sheets of ektachrome when the holders are completely filled. He stated that miscellaneous items 2 and 3 were probably included in the eleven filled film holders delivered to Secret Service, thus constituting the total of twenty-two sheets necessary to fill the holders. The Secret Service developer developed miscellaneous item #3 but did not develop miscellaneous item #2. Captain Humes suspected that in reaching the total of twenty-one in the December 5, 1963 document, the Secret Service counted miscellaneous item #3 as a part of the twenty-one total of ektachrome because it had been developed, but did not count miscellaneous item #2 because it had not been developed. He stated that since neither of the items had been exposed he did not know why

the developer would not have developed both of these items or, in the alternative, neither of these items rather than developing one and not the other. He could only assume that the developer initially found by the development process that miscellaneous item #3 had not been exposed and thereafter the developer assured himself by means other than developing the film that miscellaneous item #2 had not been exposed.

Regardless of the explanations that are possible for the twenty-one total reached by the Secret Service, Captain Humes believed that all of the photographic items taken by his staff during the autopsy were present and inspected at the National Archives on November 1, 1966.

On the afternoon of November 10, 1966, I took the original and one carbon copy of the document entitled "Report of Inspection by Naval Medical Staff on November 1, 1966 at National Archives of X-Rays and Photographs of Autopsy of President John F. Kennedy" to the Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, where it was read and signed by Captain Humes, Dr. Boswell, Captain Ebersole and Mr. John T. Stringer. Certain ink corrections were made in the document before they signed it and each of these individuals initialed each correction. The carbon copy was conformed with the original as corrected and the carbon copy as corrected was left with Captain Humes, who stated that he would place it with the other documents relating to this matter in the Office of the Commandant of the Naval Medical Center.

During this November 10, 1966 visit, Mr. Stringer presented me with a photographic negative and four photographs of another memorandum dated November 22, 1963, from FBI agents O'Neill and Sibert to Captain J. H. Stover, Jr. acknowledging receipt of "a missile" removed by "Commander James J. Humes, M.C., USN, on this date." I was told the original of this document is being kept in the Office of the Commandant, Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. I am attaching this negative and the three photographs of this memorandum.

I am also attaching five carbon copies of the "Report of Inspection by Naval Medical Staff on November 1, 1966 . . . ." Mr. Harold Reis retained the only other carbon copy of this document (including the carbon copy that was left with Captain Humes).

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

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