

*Research - Autopsy  
original drawing  
attached*

MEMORANDUM

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TO: Ken Klein  
FROM: Jim Kelly and Andy Purdy  
DATE: August 29, 1977  
RE: Interview with James Curtis Jenkins, 9:30 A.M.  
Central Time, August 24, 1977, Room 316, Federal  
Building, Jackson, Mississippi.

Mr. Jenkins was interviewed because of his participation in the autopsy of President Kennedy.

Mr. Jenkins currently resides at 210 Flag Chapel Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39209 (home phone: 601/922-6866). (See memo from Colleen Boland to Jacqueline Hess, August 17, 1977)

Mr. Jenkins told Ms. Boland in their phone conversation of August 17 that he was very hesitant to talk over the phone because he had information which was controversial. He indicated to us that will be applying for a Government Insured loan for his graduate medical education. Mr. Jenkins was in the service just over five years (serving between 1960 and 1966). Mr. Jenkins began his service in San Diego in 1960 and then went on to Balboa Hospital. Mr. Jenkins made no mention of any service in an area near Lee Oswald. Mr. Jenkins was present in Bethesda in 1963 attending lab technician school there. At the time of his training, Captain Stover was head of the Medical School, Dr. Humes Chief of the Laboratory.

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and Dr. Boswell was assistant chief of the laboratory.

Mr. Jenkins' immediate superior on the night of the autopsy was the pathologist who had duty that night (he can't remember his name).

Mr. Jenkins was a student lab technician (H.N. 4) He had been serving approximately six or seven months in that capacity, during which he had autopsy duty every fourth night. He said his duties included the admission of the body to the morgue and the discharge. He said he was normally in charge of most of the paperwork including the body description which consisted of filling in a free-printed sheet which had the body diagrams (he said the front on one side and the back on the other) and blanks for the weights and other notations. Mr. Jenkins said he participated in two or three autopsies each time he was on duty, and he usually finished about 3 - 4 A.M. Jenkins said the individuals who outlined the standard operating procedure to him were "probably" Chief Ewald, (bacteriology) and/or Chief Norman (who dealt with the "academic part").

Mr. Jenkins said that two people "pulled duty" together. He said they usually wore scrub clothes. He said his usual partner was Stanley Miller who was not present that evening for some unknown reason. He said that on that

on that night he was working with Paul O'Connor (O'Connor later married Jenkin's wife's cousin). He said that Mr. O'Connor is presently attending college in Florida. He said he thought he was at the University of Gainesville studying either sociology or psychology. (At this time Mr. Jenkins gave no indication of knowing exactly where Mr. O'Connor was or that he had been in touch with him recently).

On the day of the assassination, Mr. Jenkins learned of the death at approximately 3:30 P.M. while in class. He said classes were subsequently dismissed. He was told to prepare the morgue at approximately 4:15 - 4:30 P.M., his orders coming from the "Duty Section Chief." He said he got there about 30 - 40 minutes before the autopsy.

Mr. Jenkins said he logged the autopsy number in the ledger book but did not put a name in there. Mr. Jenkins was told not to put the name in the log. Mr. Jenkins noticed that later that evening someone had written the initial "C" or "CNC" where the name normally would be. Mr. Jenkins said that subsequent to the President's autopsy an Air Force colonel and a child were autopsied that night and would have been logged into that ledger book before it was "retired". Mr. Jenkins said that when the funeral home came in he had to identify the body. He first said he put a tag on the wrist and the big toe and later said he put it just on the big toe.

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Mr. Jenkins said he entered all information that he was supposed to on the autopsy form, except for the name. He recalled that he was told to omit the name by either the pathologist or a lieutenant. He recalled that Dr. Dixon came into the autopsy room once but doesn't believe he participated other than that. He believes that the pathologist was "...a new man."

Jenkins said he helped put the body on the table and started making the regular markings on the sheet. He recalls describing the scar on the back and the chest incisions on either side. He said he "...only remembers a throat wound which looked like a tracheotomy." He said he thought it was a tracheotomy "...because it looked like a surgically made incision." He said he saw a head wound in the "...middle temporal region back to the occipital." Mr. Jenkins described the back wound as being "...just below the collar to the right of the midline." Mr. Jenkins indicated that he was "...not sure if I finished..." filling in the markings.

Mr. Jenkins said he located the marks on the body before any weighing was done and "...as soon as I came in."

Mr. Jenkins said he believes Dr. Humes attempted to probe the back wound. He said he didn't believe the doctor found that the probe "...penetrated into the chest." Mr. Jenkins said he believed the organs had already been taken out. He said the body was "...repeatedly X-rayed because they felt there should be a bullet or something there."

Mr. Jenkins recalls writing down the weights, but doesn't "...believe [he] actually weighed them." He said the doctors did not redo the sheets that he had prepared to his knowledge.

Mr. Jenkins is "...unsure who did the incision... ." He believes Commander Boswell "...did most of the work." Mr. Jenkins was not clear as to who may have been giving the autopsy doctors their orders. He said "...a lot of people were making suggestions." Mr. Jenkins appeared very uneasy about this subject. Specifically, he said he "...was very uneasy about this... ." He said he wished someone had "...talked with me several years ago when this was fresher." He said that "...with the Warren Commission findings you can understand why I am skeptical."

Mr. Jenkins said that he doesn't specifically recall any photographs being taken of the interior of the chest. He said he believes that full body X-rays were taken including the extremities. He said he "...saw them do them." He said all were taken for the autopsy. He said

the whole body X-rays are "normal" in legal autopsy. Mr. Jenkins said the only thing he found "impressionable" was that Drs. Humes, Boswell and the Captain of the Honor Guard were "...the only ones not of flag rank."

Mr. Jenkins said he was told subsequent to the autopsy by an admiral not to discuss the autopsy. He said he later learned this man was the Surgeon General.

While Mr. Jenkins recalled no comment regarding the tracheotomy, he said he thought the "...natural assumption was that it was a tracheotomy, because it was a natural procedure." He recalls the doctors' concern about not being able to find any metal fragments. He said repeated X-rays were taken by a "...third class X-ray technician." He remembered that if anyone left the morgue they did so with a Marine escort. He said food was brought in. He said he didn't leave during the autopsy.

Regarding the autopsy descriptive sheet, Mr. Jenkins recalls that he "...put in the chest incisions and tracheotomy." That he doesn't think he drew the back wound. He said it was possible that Dr. Humes added to the sheet. Mr. Jenkins said that five or six years later he saw a publication\*which included an autopsy descriptive sheet which he "...didn't feel was the same one he wrote on." He said this made him very uneasy. Specifically, he "...didn't believe it was my handwriting." He is sure

\*It may have been Time or Newsweek but he could not identify it.

he "...wrote at least some of the information on the sheet." He said his recollection was "very striking." He said it was a situation where he looked at something and "knew" it was wrong.

Mr. Jenkins believes that he wrote on the sheet in pencil. He said it was "...a requirement that it had to be done in pencil." He said the sheet was on a clipboard which had a string with a pencil attached. He recalls that the back side of the figure was on the back of the sheet and said he has no recollection of a drawing of a head on the sheet anywhere. He believes the writing on the sheet would have had to have been by Paul O'Connor, one of the doctors or himself.

Mr. Jenkins said he has no information concerning the destruction of any film during the autopsy. He says he does remember an incident which was possibly that. He said it was "...a brief flare up." He said there were a lot of incidences like that where people were curt" and specifically remembered that the "...gallery was very impatient." They seemed to be "...mad about the doctors not finding a bullet."

Regarding the head wound, Mr. Jenkins said he was "...surprised at the conclusions the doctors reached."

He said he was previously at Cecilfield where he saw a person who had been shot in the side of the head. He said this wound seemed to come in the right side above the ear and out the top left. He said the visitors were "...so intense..." about finding the wound in the back of the head. He said he has a "...vague recollection of the doctors trying to fit the bones in the head... ." He said he thought the bones were already there and not the bones they brought in.

Mr. Jenkins recalls Humes trying to probe the wound with his finger which enabled him to reach the end of the wound. He said that around the time of the probing they repeated took X-rays of the area. He said he believes they examined the organs for any trace of the bullet or bullet fragment. Regarding the possibility of the chest having been opened, and face blood or fluid present, he said "...I should remember...it would be my job to suction it."

Mr. Jenkins was also present for the embalming of the body. He said the embalmers replaced some of the tissue and used some type of plaster molding to close the head wound. He said there was a problem with the right eye because it wouldn't remain closed. He said this was one of the reasons the body was not viewed with an open casket. He recalls the mortician trying to arrange the small skull fragments in the head and believes some of them were put in a small jar during the autopsy.

Mr. Jenkins said he couldn't recall whether or not the brain was removed but said that "...it is normally my function to remove the brain and infiltrate it." He says the brain was possibly put in a glass jar. However, he then said the brain is usually first put in a fusion bucket (crock or porcelain) before it is put in the glass, usually about 24 hours later.

Mr. Jenkins remembers the doctors examining X-rays on the viewing screen to try to find fragments but can't remember whether they found any or whether they removed any from the body or the head. He recalls "... a lot of little jars..." but can't remember the fragments.

Jenkins does not remember whether any agents were present; he recalls a number of civilians there and he knew that the Secret Service was there but he didn't know who they were.

Mr. Jenkins said that the cleanup of the autopsy normally entails the proper labeling of the organs. He said this would have been done under Boswell's directions. He recalls that the body was put in a different casket and the sheets were put in a laundry basket. He said that he and Paul O'Connor were the last ones to leave the morgue.

Jenkins was later told that the paper work was "retired". He had the feeling that some of it was put in Galloway's hospital safe. Jenkins recalls giving a face sheet to Boswell. He is not sure if Paul or he wrote the numbers but he believes one of them did as the organs were weighed. He said that the face sheet probably had blood on it.

Mr. Jenkins said that the whole attitude of the autopsy room changed when Dr. Humes came in. He had a sense that it was very restricted and that he had to watch what he said. He said the whole thing became a "...guarded type of thing." Jenkins had the distinct impression that someone in the gallery was "...telling them what to do."

Jenkins recalls Humes discussing with someone the problem of finding the bullet. He said this discussion amounted to a "disturbance." Jenkins had the impression that everything "...seemed like it was predesignated...seemed they had an answer and wanted to prove it." Said he doesn't remember any phone calls being made but does remember a phone being on the wall.

Jenkins said that "...a lot of people were taking notes in the galleries... some in suits and some in uniforms. He said that "...possibly Humes made recorded notations..." of what he saw.

Jenkins said the back wound was "...very shallow... it didn't enter the peritoneal (chest) cavity." He said the wound to the head entered the top rear quadrant from the front side.

Approximately 11:45 P.M. we accompanied subject to the Gartan Justice Building Law Library to examine the version of the autopsy descriptive sheet contained therein. We examined CE 397, Volume 17, pages 45 - 46. While examining the front page of the autopsy descriptive sheet, Jenkins said that it "should have a Navy number on the top left." As he was examining the sheet which had a lot of blank spaces, Jenkins said "...all the top would have had to be filled in." He said that the numbers looked "...like my handwriting...", referring to the numbers on the top part of the page. The number at the top left of the page was stamped or typed in and Jenkins said "...it would be written in." Jenkins said he believes he hand wrote in that number on the original autopsy descriptive sheet.

Regarding the writing concerning the head wound on the diagram itself, Jenkins said it was "...not mine." Jenkins said he would have labeled the back scar (it is labeled); but he said it was "...not his handwriting." Regarding the mark in the location of the throat wound, Jenkins said the slit he drew was "...not crescent-like..." like the one in the Warren Commission volumes. Jenkins

added that it was normal for the pathologist to sign the descriptive sheet which was not done on the version in the report. Jenkins said all the heights and weights "...would be filled in..." but said he could "...not remember specifically" writing them in.

Jenkins said the notations regarding the lung, spleen and kidney looked like his handwriting. He said that the "...date did not even look like... his handwriting. He said that "...possibly the rest is Pauls."

Jenkins said "...we would write the starting time in." The starting time blank was not filled in. Regarding the diagram, Jenkins said "...none of that handwriting looks like mine." He said that the autopsy descriptive sheet in the Warren volumes does not look like the one he saw in the publication five - six years after the autopsy.

Jenkins does not recall a small hole in the head as drawn on the descriptive sheet; he said that the big hole would have covered the area where the little hole was drawn on the sheet. Regarding the back wound he said that he "...thought it was a little higher up, underneath the collar." He said the wound itself was "...below the collar at an angle, in a downward trajectory." Jenkins had no information regarding the changes in the numbers in the top part of the sheet.

Jenkins recalled that the doctors extensively attempted to probe the back wound. He said the probe they used was a metal one, approximately eight inches long. He said that "...most of the probe went in... between the skin..." and not into the chest cavity. He said Humes could probe the bottom of the wound with his little finger and said that the metal probe went in 2 - 4 inches. He said it was quite a "...fact of controversy..." that the doctors "...couldn't prove the bullet came into the cavity."

Jenkins said he "...possibly drew the back scar..." but "...doesn't think so... ." He said he is "positive" he didn't draw the head wound.

Jenkins said the number of the patient on the log and on the descriptive sheet would be the same. He said he thought they may have had a stamp for putting the number of the log, but didn't for the descriptive sheet. Jenkins believes he would have filled in the physical description where the descriptive sheet is blank regarding the color of the eyes, the race, the hair color and the height. Jenkins said the chest measurements or the location of the chest incisions were not made by him, and were possibly made by Paul. Regarding erasures generally, Jenkins said they must be initialed.

When asked about his recollection that the drawing of the front of the body was on one side of the sheet and the back on the other, he said it was "...possibly his recollection from another morgue."

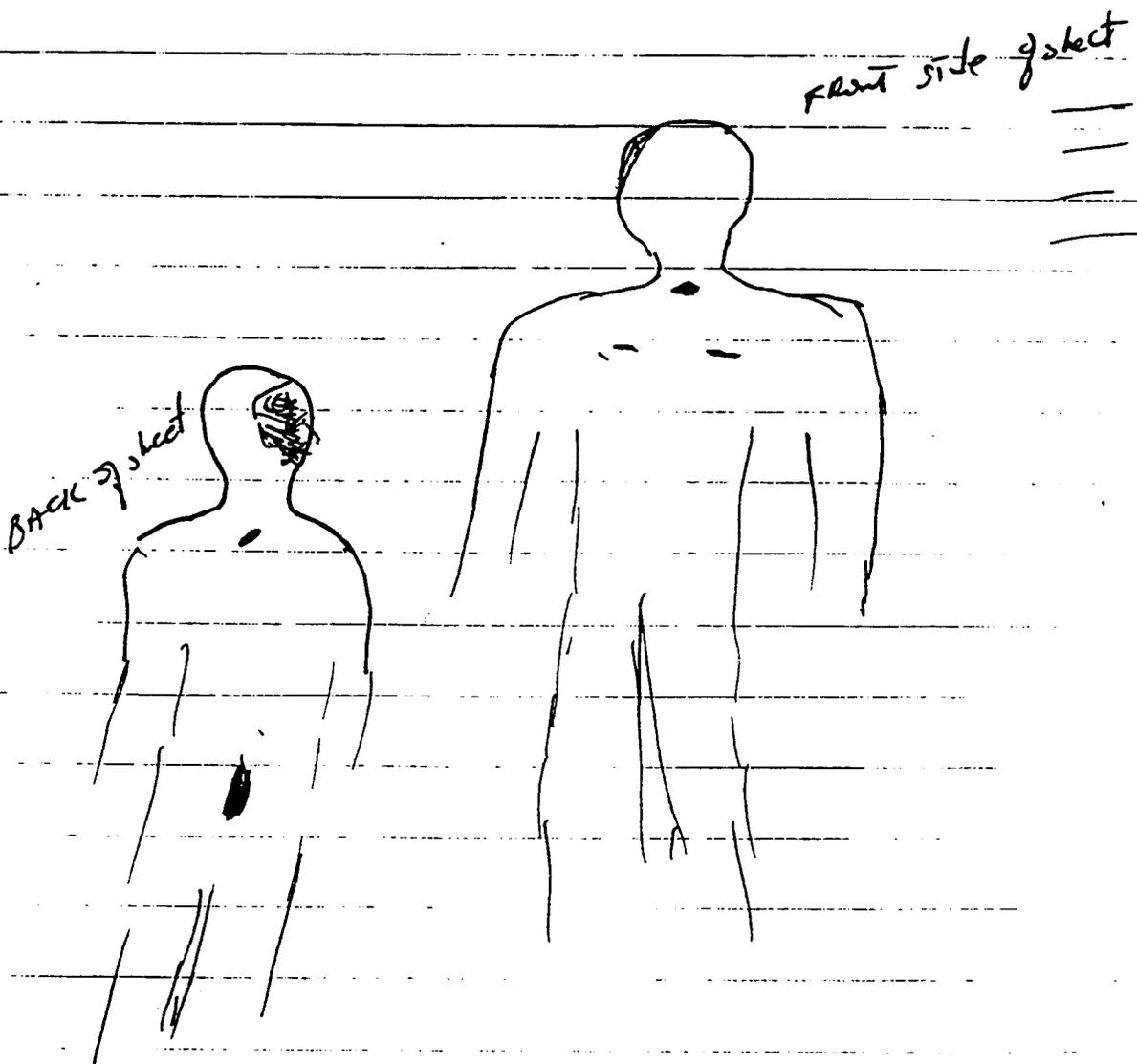
Regarding the autopsy descriptive sheet he saw in the publication, he said the other one was neater and he "...couldn't be sure that the numbers in it were his." Jenkins says he has no recollection of the drawing of the head on the back side.

Regarding CE 386 (Volume 16, page 977), Jenkins said the wound at the top part of the head looked familiar but said he had no recollection of the little bullet hole in the head. Jenkins placed the major defect in the head a little lower than the schematic drawing. He said that the neck wound he recalled was lower and more to the midline than that drawn in the drawing. He reiterated his belief that the wound in the back was "...below the collar line which is what the picture shows."

Regarding CE 385, Jenkins said he didn't see the possibility that it was accurate. He said he didn't remember whether anyone looked to see if the trach was torn. He said that the probing of the back wound was attempted toward the center as indicated in the drawing, but said that in actuality the only way the probe was able to go in was at a "...fairly drastic angle downward so as

not to enter the cavity." He added that he thought the entry wound in the back was lower than that shown in the drawing. He said he didn't notice any bruising at the tip of the lung. He said that according to his recollection of the location of the back wound the bullet would have been going upward through the body to have exited in the front of the neck. He said he is basing his impression of the direction of the bullet on the fact that the probe did not enter the body cavity.

Jenkins said he believed the autopsy face sheet was essentially "accurate" regarding the location of the wound in the back.



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James [Signature]

Witnessed by

Donald A. Rudy, Jr.

James L. Kelley

Jackson, Miss