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ComposedDate_Time: 2:55:00 PM
Subject: ARRB Interviewed Joe Hagan of Gawler's (Writeup Expanded on 3/05/97)
MEETING REPORT DOCUMENT 3 AUTHOR: DOUGLAS HORNE/ARRB Date Created: 03/17/96 Meeting Logistics Date: 05/17/96
Agecny Name: Witnesses/ConsultantsAttendees: Joseph E. Hagan, David Marwell, Tom Samoluk, Jeremy Gunn, Tim Wray, Doug HorneTopic: ARRB Interviewed Joe Hagan of Gawler's (Writeup Expanded on 3/05/97)
Summary of the Meeting Mr. Hagan, in response to a subpoena he requested from the ARRB, brought the Gawler's document file on President Kennedy's preparation for burial with him, and submitted to a lengthy ARRB interview of approximately 2.5 hours, which was audiotaped on two 90-minute cassettes. Following the interview, Mr. Hagan was sent a copy of the audiotape, in lieu of a transcript (which was not created). Tim Wray conducted the majority of the interview. This is a summary of the principal points covered in this lengthy interview. All events described are as they were represented by Mr. Hagan during the interview; i.e., represent his opinions and recollections, without any emendations. (Today Mr. Hagan is President of Gawler's; in 1963 he said he was an "Operations Manager," a person who had a supervisory role in regard to the duties of all funeral home employees involved in preparation for burial.) Notification of Gawler's Involvement in President Kennedy's Funeral Arrangements Gawler's was called at about 4:25 P.M. on 11/22/63 by Colonel Paul Miller, Chief of Ceremonies and Special Events for MDW, and asked to prepare President Kennedy for burial. Immediately after receiving this call, Gawler's independently called back Colonel Miller at MDW to confirm the authenticity of this tasking. Gawler's was told 3 things during this second telephone call:--Provide Funeral Services for President Kennedy;--Have a hearse at Andrews AFB for "wheels down" of Air Force One about 6 P.M.; and--That the body of the President would be driven in their hearse directly to Gawler's. Orders then began changing--after the fact, Colonel Miller told Hagan this was due to orders received from Sergeant Shriver, who had taken charge of funeral arrangements at the White House on behalf of the Kennedy family. Miller told Hagan later that there was great uncertainty the evening of 11/22/63 over where the President was to be buried, the type of ceremony to be arranged, etc--that the situation was very fluid. A "death watch," i.e., Honor Guard troops (Branch of Service not specified), arrived at Gawler's and set up a "command post" prior to the arrival of Air Force One at Andrews. At the "last minute," Gawler's received a call from someone (probably Colonel Miller again, or possibly Jack Metzler, Superintendent of Arlington Cemetary) who directed Gawler's NOT to send the hearse to Andrews AFB, since a Navy Ambulance would be used instead to transport the President's body. (At this time the destination of the body in the Navy ambulance was not specified.) [At a later date Colonel Miller told Hagan that at one point on 11/22/63, there had been a plan for a helicopter to take the President's body from Andrews to the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Record
Body:
recstat:
DeliveryPriority: N
DeliveryReport: B
ReturnReceipt:
Categories: