

cam

RHH

BEFORE THE
ASSASSINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD

----- X
:
IN RE: :
:
ASSASSINATION OF :
PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY :
:
----- X

Thursday, September 11, 1997

College Park, Maryland

The deposition of JAMES W. SIBERT, called for examination in the above-entitled matter, pursuant to notice, at the National Archives II, 6381 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland, convened at 1:10 p.m. before Robert H. Haines, a notary public in and for the State of Maryland, when were present on behalf of the parties:

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the Plaintiff:

T. JEREMY GUNN, ESQ.
General Counsel
Assassination Records Review Board
600 E Street, N.W., Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 724-0088
(202) 724-0457 Fax

ALSO PRESENT:

Douglas P. Horne, Senior Analyst
Thomas E. Samoluk, Esq.
Joan Zimmerman, Ph.D.
Sarah Ahmed
Carrie Fletcher

- - -

C O N T E N T S

WITNESS

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR
U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

James W. Sibert

3

SIBERT DEPOSITION EXHIBITS

MARKED

ARRB Exhibit No. MD 188

75

[All exhibits retained by Mr. Gunn.]

P R O C E E D I N G S

Whereupon,

JAMES W. SIBERT

was called for examination by counsel for the U.S. Department of Justice and, having been first duly sworn by the notary public, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR U.S. JUSTICE

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Could you state your full name for the record, please?

A Yes. That's James W. Sibert, S-i-b-e-r-t.

Q Mr. Sibert, I'm here on behalf of the Assassination Records Review Board. As a part of our work, we have taken the depositions of several people who have been affiliated with issues related to the autopsy and to medical evidence. And we are -- wanted to talk to you today, in the light of this other work that we're doing.

We have a few other people here from the Review Board, whom I would like to introduce you to. On my immediate right is Doug Horne, whom you have met, and Tom Samoluk. At the back is Dr. Joan Zimmerman --

THE WITNESS: How do you do?

BY MR. GUNN:

Q -- Sarah Ahmed, and Carrie Fletcher.

THE WITNESS: How do you do?

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Mr. Sibert, is there any reason that you feel that you would not be able to speak with us today candidly and openly about your memories of issues related to the assassination of President Kennedy?

A No, there is not.

Q What I would like to do during the course of this deposition is ask you a series of questions.

If I ask a question that isn't clear to you, please don't hesitate to ask me either to rephrase the question or repeat the question.

If there's anytime during the deposition you'd like to take a break, don't hesitate to request. That matter can be easily arranged.

Mr. Sibert, did you do anything in preparation for the deposition today?

cam

5

A Yes, I did. I reviewed my 302. I had a copy of that out of Popkin's book, "The Second Oswald". I've -- At home, I kept a file drawer on the Kennedy assassination.

And from time to time, I've received telephone calls or written communications from people regarding this autopsy. And some of them were answered.

And those that I didn't have that on, I've had the notes that I brought with me today. For example, David Lifton, author of "The Best Evidence". A couple of times, he called. And I've got those notes with me.

Q Were you --

A Also --

Q Go ahead.

A Also, I sort of reviewed his book, just to see -- I hadn't read the last edition. I mean, everything he had in it. Just out of curiosity, to sort of brush up on --

Q You're referring to Mr. Lifton's book?

A Lifton's. "Best Evidence"; right.

Q Okay. Are you acquainted with Frank O'Neill?

A Yes, I am.

cam

6

Q Have you spoken with him since the deposition was set up?

A No, not since this was set up.

Q Other than Mr. Lifton's book about the assassination, have you read any other books?

A Yeah. I -- I don't have the list of those books, but there's several of them that I have. They're at home, but --

My memory on authors here.

But Crenshaw's book, I read it when -- paperback, when it came out. One of the Dallas doctors.

And one of the other books that I can't recall. There was delegated, I think, by the Kennedy people to write a book --

Q Was it William Manchester?

A Manchester's book; right.

And another thing, anytime I go to the bookstore down in Fort Myers -- a new book, I'd always check and see -- go back to the name index and see if my name appeared in that. I figured I'd better check and see what they said about me.

So, some of those books. I didn't purchase too many, but --

cam

7

Q Would it be fair to say that you have some familiarity, at least, with the literature on the Kennedy assassination?

A I think you could say that.

Q Okay. What I'd like to do is try and get a survey of several possible things that you may have done related to the assassination. Then we would go back and talk about some in greater depth.

Now, the first one would be the events on November 22nd and 23rd that you were involved in. What I'd like to do is, again, skip from that one, and then find out what other things that you did do.

You made a reference just a moment ago to your 302. I would like to show you a document -- for purposes of this deposition has been marked MD 151 --

A Right.

Q -- and ask you if this is the document that you were referring to when you said your 302?

A No, this is not the original 302. Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, this is.

Q Just so that the record will be clear here. You are

cam

8

looking, I believe, at the first two pages that were -- are typically known as administrative pages of the document. And, so, when you went further into the document --

A Right.

Q -- that you saw the 302.

A Yeah. This was a letter enclosure, I guess, which I do -- The reason -- When Lifton called me one time, first he said, "I've got your FD 302." And I had no knowledge that this was even in -- been taken out of the Archives.

And I said, "Well, let me ask you a question." I said, "My name is down at the bottom. And Frank O'Neill is at the bottom." I said, "Is there any other initial there?"

And he said, "Yeah, DFL."

And I knew that was it. That's the chief steno that took this dictation in Baltimore, Doris F. Leibknecht, L-e-i-b-k-n-e-c-h-t.

Q Okay. We'll also come back to the 302. I believe that you also did some interviews shortly after the assassination with some people. Do you remember having conducted any interviews?

cam

9

A Yes. And I brought along -- I managed to keep a few records. I've kept these Week-at-a-Glance every year I was in the Bureau, 21 years. I've brought '63 and '64 here. And in --

I assume you're talking about the interviews over at the White House with Behn and Kellerman and Greer --

Q Yes.

A -- who were Secret Service personnel.

Q Yes.

A And I have here on -- We received a call from headquarters -- I guess, was probably it -- transferred through our Baltimore headquarters, that they wanted these Secret Service agents interviewed. O'Neill and I went over and interviewed them.

And let's see, that's -- Do you have a date on that? The 27th? Okay, that's November 27th. Here it is.

On Wednesday, November 27th -- a file number which reflects on your FD 302, 89-30 -- interviews of Gerald Behn, B-e-h-n; Roy Kellerman, R-o-y K-e-l-l-e-r-m-a-n, who was sitting in the right-hand seat beside Bill Greer, the driver;

cam

10

and William Greer, the driver of the limousine. That was all conducted at the White House on the 27th.

Q In addition to those interviews -- Actually, let me withdraw that.

Let me show you a document that is marked MD 152, and ask you whether this document contains the 302s that were the interviews of Messrs. Behn, Kellerman, and Greer?

A Yes.

Q In addition to -- or were there any other interviews that you formally conducted related to the assassination beyond those of Messrs. Behn, Kellerman, and Greer?

A As far as the White House, I think, those are the only interviews that were conducted on that.

I was thinking, in '64, I had one that -- That was on March the 12th of 1964, when O'Neill and I went over to Washington, D.C. from our Hyattsville resident agency, where both of us worked, and were interviewed by our inspector, who was, I believe, the counsel for the Warren Commission at that time.

We didn't keep any notes on that. He conducted the

interview. And, so, I don't --

Q After that interview, do you recall talking to anyone at the FBI about the substance of that interview --

A Yes.

Q -- with Mr. Specter?

A We -- When we left Mr. Specter, we went over to headquarters. And I believe it was Jim Malley -- I can't be sure, but he sat on the desk there that was handling this assassination -- and told him basically what we could recall. Questions that were given to us.

Q When you were interviewed by Mr. Specter, was there anyone else from the FBI present, in addition to Mr. O'Neill?

A No.

Q So, you three -- Was there anyone else from the Warren Commission staff present?

A No, just the three of us.

Q Okay. Did you ever see a report written by anyone at the FBI about the interview --

A With Specter?

Q -- that you had with Mr. Specter?

A No, I have not.

Q I'd like to show you a document that's marked Exhibit No. 153, and ask if this refreshes your recollection whether you have seen a document that reports on the interview?

A [Examining.]

Q Mr. Sibert, let me withdraw the pending question, and ask you another question. Have you had an opportunity to read Exhibit No. 153 just now?

A This?

Q Yes.

A No, I've never read this before.

Q But you have -- now have read the report?

A Now I have read it, yeah.

Q And, so, the answer to the preceding question was, you have not previously seen the document.

A No.

Q 153.

A This is the first time I've seen this.

Q Okay. As you read through that -- and I understand that you read it quickly -- was there anything that stood out

in your mind as something that appeared to you to be inaccurate, or refreshed your recollection about something that you had forgotten?

And, again, I'm not asking for a comprehensive statement, but --

A No, I understand. [Examining.]

On this page three here: "Question: Prior to SA Sibert's calling the FBI laboratory, did either Dr. Hume or Dr. Finck express an opinion as to whether the bullet wound in the back was a point of entry or a point of exit?"

In connection with the probing. And I remember Humes saying that, about it looked like a 40- or 60-degree angle that had penetrated the back.

And as close as we were to the autopsy, I was as close as -- closer than here to the court recorder here -- I mean, when we're looking at that. And we were at the rear most of the time there of the head. And you could see this tremendous head injury. And --

Q When you say as close to the court reporter, you'd mean somewhere in the area of six to --

A Well, I'd --

Q -- eight feet?

A I'd say I was this -- this close.

Q Somewhere --

A Arm's length.

Q Arm's length.

A Yeah.

Q Somewhere around three feet?

A About that. Right, right.

Q Three to four feet.

Does Exhibit 153, to the best of your current recollection, reasonably fairly record the statements that you made to the FBI official about the interview with Mr. Specter?

A It looks like. It's been so long, and with no notes or -- I can't recall exactly what -- what -- I think it was Malley. I -- Is this --

Rosen, of course, was the -- the head of that unit.

And Malley, Jim Malley -- I think he's deceased now -- he was his number one man, so to speak, that O'Neill and I talked to when we went over there on -- it seemed like one other occasion,

the time we were called over on something about whether it was our wording or the doctor's wording.

And, of course, our position in that was that we were there in an observatory capacity that night. We had no investigative jurisdiction to -- to conduct an investigation.

We were there to observe, obtain any bullets, hand-carry them to the laboratory to preserve the chain of evidence.

And that, in particular, there was the statement that Humes made when we first -- when the body first came in, and they opened the casket. And I can't recall whether it was when they -- It was wrapped in sheets. I mean, a sheet around the body and a separate sheet around the head, which was blood-soaked, of course.

But when they placed the body on the autopsy table, whether it was looking in the casket or not, Humes made the statement that there's been an apparent tracheotomy and surgery in the head area.

And this was in my FD 302. And this has been a point -- and I've often said since then, that in looking back, which we can all do after something happens, I --

After the big piece came in from the -- was found in the limousine out in Dallas, a piece of the skull -- that if I would have had the presence of mind -- Of course, things were happening fast, and you had brass and rank there that went to the ceiling.

If I'd asked him -- Dr. Humes, I'm speaking of, the pathologist: "Dr. Humes, now that this piece has come in, does this account for your first statement about being surgery in the head area?" Which I -- didn't occur to me at the time.

Of Lifton's book, this is theme, of course, about surgery in the head area. And looking back, I would say that that's been one thing I've always regretted; that I didn't.

And maybe we could have clarified it a lot, also, about any calls over to -- maybe I'm getting ahead of myself -- over to -- Well, let me just cite one example here.

Q Actually, if I could --

A Yeah.

Q -- stop you for a moment. I would like to go through all of these things --

A Right.

Q -- in detail.

A Right.

Q What I'd like to do is get some preliminary --

A Right.

Q -- things on the record, and identify --

A Yeah.

Q -- some documents. Then we'll go through it in very careful, sequential order.

So, just sort of the pending question now is, does this document appear to you to be accurately reflecting the words that you said, either to Mr. Malley or Mr. Rosen at the FBI?

A Well, I think, basically, I can't see anything, unless there's something that you might have found that you'd want to ask me.

Q Again, the purpose of the question now is just, does this seem to reasonably accurately reflect the discussion that you had with Mr. Malley at the FBI?

A Yes.

Q Okay. In addition to the discussions that you've

already mentioned -- that is, with Mr. Specter and with the interviews of other people -- are there any other interviews that you recall having had regarding the Kennedy assassination during the time that the Warren Commission was in existence?

So, I'm -- I'll rephrase that.

During the period 1963-64, were there any other interviews or any other activities that you were engaged in that you now recall --

A Well, when was this House Select Committee?

Q That's in the late 1970s.

A '70s, yeah. I was thinking that I was interviewed, of course, by Mr. Purdy and Kelly. I can't think of any, offhand.

Q Okay. Between the time of the Warren Commission, which ends in 1964, and the time of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, do you have any recollections of any activities that you were involved in that related to the Kennedy assassination?

So, again, up to but not including the House Select

Committee.

A Yeah. And you say that started in --

Q 1978. 1977.

A By this, you mean any telephone calls, inquiries by individuals? That's what you're referring to here?

Q Right now, it would be anything that would be official or semi-official U.S. government. So, speaking with Secret Service, FBI, any government agency.

A I can't recall any further with government agents, no.

Q Let me show you a couple of documents, Nos. 157 and 158. And see if this helps refresh your recollection --

A Yeah.

Q -- of any other activities you may have --

A Thirty-four years, you get a few cobwebs.

Q Sure.

A I remember this name, Rapov. Now, I don't know whether -- I don't think I --

Q While you're looking at those documents, I'll just be identifying them for the record.

cam

20

MR. GUNN: Document MD 157 appears on its face to be a letterhead memorandum, dated June 29th, 1966, from Special Agent Francis O'Neill and James Sibert to SAC, Baltimore. It is a two-page document.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

MR. GUNN: And MD 158 appears on its face to be a one-page letterhead memorandum -- excuse me -- two-page letterhead memorandum, dated October 13th, 1966, from James W. Sibert to SAC, Baltimore.

THE WITNESS: Mm-hmm. I said I hadn't had any contact. I remember when I was -- November the 2nd of 1966. And I was on annual leave, down visiting my sister who lives in Quitman, Georgia. Lifton called me the first time. And that was when I made notes, and I've got those.

And when I came back off of leave, I called over to headquarters. And I don't remember who the supervisor -- whether it was Fletcher Thompson, or it could have been Malley. But, anyway, whoever I talked to over there, I told them that Lifton didn't mean anything to me, other than what he had said.

He called me from out in California, and he read me this 302 that appears in this "Second Oswald" by Popkin here.

It was an appendix. I wasn't aware that he even had it. But I made this known to the --

They said, "Well, give us an airtel on -- on what he said to you that night on the phone call," which I dictated from Baltimore, because O'Neill wasn't, of course, even in on this. I was on leave, and he had got a hold of me. So, that would have been an official --

And then, at different times, Fletcher Thompson would call over. And he'd say, "Si," he'd say, "this wording here in -- on your 302," on measurements or something like that, "is this your statement, or is this the doc's?"

And I made it very clear. I said, "Look, I'm not a doctor." I said, "Any measurements that are given were obtained from the doctor." And if there was any question about the -- hearing it correctly, he was asked to repeat it.

And, also, any -- like this tracheotomy and surgery to the head area, this was voiced by Humes. And we just merely made a note right at the inception of the autopsy as to what

cam

22

was said.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Let me show you a document that has been marked MD 171, and ask you whether that is the 302 or that made -- to which you just referred?

A Yeah. When he called Hyattsville, that was my son. He was a University of Maryland student then. And he said, "He's not here. He's down in Quitman, Georgia." And that's how Lifton got my sister's phone number down there.

I told him one other thing in there, too, that he didn't put in this airtel. He put it in his book. And that was -- he said, "Well, this 302 here, here's your name and everything." He said, "And you told me something that you couldn't go any further on, that you'd have to contact the Bureau."

And I said, "Well, let's just let the record stand."

And in his book, it was rather amusing to me when I read it, because he said that he didn't want to put that in there, because Mr. Hoover might not have taken a good view of that, and I would end -- I think he and Liefner, the other

fellow, said I might end up in Alaska somewhere on a disciplinary transfer or something.

But I did tell him that. And --

Q Just to make --

A Yeah.

Q -- make sure that the record is clear. You did tell him that you wanted the record to stand.

A I said --

Q And you did tell him something about Mr. Hoover.

A He was quoting this 302. And once I asked him about this DFL and everything, I said, "Well, you've got the 302." And I said, "And all I can say is, we'll just let the record stand."

Because we had two different autopsy reports by this time. This is '66. You had the Navy autopsy, which we never saw. And we weren't even advised that there had been a change in the original autopsy from what was published.

Q Just so -- again, so the record is clear. The point that you made about Mr. Hoover and being sent to Alaska --

A Oh.

Q -- that was what Mr. Lifton added. And that's --

A He put this in his book. He said --

Q No, you said.

A No, no.

Q Okay.

A He said -- put that in his book. And Liefner, I think, was the fellow that he did graduate study --

Q Wesley Liebner?

A Liebner; that's correct. I was pretty close.

And Liebner had made that statement to him that, "It's a good thing you didn't put that in there." And, of course, I didn't have any feeling about that.

But that was the only thing I could say, "Well, you've got the -- my -- a accurate copy of my FD 302, so let's just let the record stand. And if you have any further inquiry, why, write to FBI headquarters."

Q Okay. Back to Exhibits Nos. 153 and 157, are those -- do you recognize those two documents?

A [Examining.]

Q Excuse me. Let me withdraw the last question. And,

cam

25

again, I'm asking whether you recognize Exhibits Nos. 157 and 158.

A Okay. Yeah, I might mention -- on this Exhibit 157 -- that we were in that autopsy room. One of us was present all the time, with the exception of when photographs and radiology work -- X-rays were done.

Of course, you can see the reason for that. We didn't have lead jackets to wear, like a doctor does working around that. But, otherwise, one of us was always present.

When I went out to make this call over to Killion, O'Neill was present. And I think we had a bite to eat, maybe.

And one -- one ate, and the other one stayed. And, so, we were there at all times. So, that -- that's a good -- the only thing I'd add on that, 157.

Q So, just to interrupt and make sure the record is clear. You do recognize Exhibit No. 157 as having been written --

A Yes.

Q -- by yourself?

A Mm-hmm, and O'Neill. And 158 here is my airtel -- or

communication, rather.

Q Let me just try just phrasing a question. Do you recognize Exhibit No. 158 as having been written by yourself?

A I do.

Q Now, let me try just one last series of questions on overview. Again, the time that I'll be referring to is prior to the time of the HSCA in 1977.

Did you have any other official contacts with any person in the U.S. government related to the Kennedy assassination, other than those that we have spoken about now?

A I can't recall any. Just like I remember now, it comes back on Rapov there, and Fletcher Thompson, and those. But I can't recall any additional ones.

Q Okay. Let me try some names, and see if you had any -- have any recollection of having ever spoken to them about issues related to the Kennedy assassination.

J. Edgar Hoover?

A None with him.

Q Cartha DeLoach?

A No.

Q William Sullivan?

A No.

Q James Fox, from the Secret Service?

A No.

Q Robert Knudsen, affiliated with the White House?

A No.

Q Other than at the autopsy, did you ever speak again with Drs. Humes, Finck, or Boswell?

A No.

Q Did you ever speak with Robert Bouck of the Secret Service?

A Not that I can recall.

Q Mr. Bouck was responsible, to some extent, for autopsy materials. Does that help refresh recollection, as to whether you might have met with him?

A Autopsy materials. You mean the -- like photographs --

Q Yes.

A -- and stuff like that, that was --

I don't believe so. We got -- we received that

inventory that Humes gave us, which I included in my FD 302.

But I can't recall Bouck conversing with myself or -- I don't know about O'Neill, but I think he would have probably contacted both of us.

Q Okay. Do you recall that there was an investigation conducted by Jim Garrison, the District Attorney of New Orleans?

A Yes, I've read --

Q Did you have any involvement with that, one way or the other?

A None whatsoever.

Q So, you were never --

A Never contacted.

Q -- contacted by Mr. Garrison, for example?

Mr. Sibert, when did you join the FBI?

A April the 2nd, 1951.

Q And would that make it fair to say that by 1963 you had been with the FBI for approximately 12 years?

A Right.

Q What was your position in 1963?

A In '63, when this incident happened, I had been

cam

29

assigned to Baltimore. And I was sent down to Hyattsville in 1956. At that time, we had a senior resident agent there that retired later on. And I followed him in as the senior resident agent.

And that was in '63 -- early '63, I think, because I remember we moved our location. And Agent O'Neill was my alternate senior resident agent.

Q Prior to the assassination of President Kennedy, had you ever witnessed, yourself, an autopsy?

A Yes. I had witnessed -- let's see how many -- I think, two before this happened. Neither one of them were gunshot wounds.

Subsequent to this in '63, I witness another one that was a gunshot wound, involving a fellow that was -- a fugitive was killed by agents.

But the other one was -- it was a Condetti case that happened over there. A boy had been kidnapped, and sexually assaulted, and everything. And I witnessed that autopsy there at --

Then I witnessed another one over at the hospital

at Andrews Air Force Base. It was conducted on the wife of a clerk. And they both worked at Ident. And he had left that morning. And she was several months pregnant, and claimed that she felt real bad -- and such terrific headaches and everything.

And he went on to work and kept trying to call her, and couldn't get in touch with her. And when he came home that night, he found her laying across a bed with blood running out of her nose. And she had had a coronary eruption or --

Q Cerebral hemorrhage?

A Cerebral; right.

So, the reason I witnessed that, of course, was to clear the husband, because no one had seen her since that time. And it was a ruptured inguinal ring up there -- a ring in there. There were just -- It sits like a sidewall on automobile tires, the way the pathologist explained it.

And then after that, I -- Let's see, that's two of them. And then the Kennedy autopsy.

I witnessed one more while I was senior resident agent. Two of our agents, this fellow told them -- They were

cam

31

interviewing him, and he pulled a gun on them. He said, "When you leave here tonight, one of your wives is going to be a widow."

So, it came later on, he wanted some cigarettes. And they threw them in there to him. And when he did, why, one of the agents pulled his gun and told him to freeze. And he swung around like he was going to shoot. And that was three gunshot wounds right up to the side.

And if I could -- This is a point here that I've always contrasted with the Kennedy assassination, if I'm at liberty to do that.

When I went over to do this -- witness this autopsy, it was --

Q Which autopsy?

A Burns.

Q Okay.

A This was the one on the agent that had to shoot this fellow. And they had him on kidney dialysis and everything. He eventually died. So, I witnessed the autopsy.

And Dr. Burns there at the Cheverly General Hospital in Cheverly, Maryland -- he said, "Now, I wasn't on duty when

this fellow came in that night." He said, "The fellow is upstairs that was -- the doctor that attended him." And he said, "I'm going to get him down here before I start."

So, he -- he said, "I think I can look at this. And I'll tell you which are sutures for drainage, and which are bullet wounds," he said, "but I wasn't there." He said, "I want to get it from the horse's mouth."

So, he called this other doctor down. And the other doctor said, "Well," he said, "when I got this patient in," he said, "these were bullet wounds. These three." And he said, "These were sutures that I made."

Burns said, "Fine." He said, "That's what I assumed, but I wanted to get it straight."

Now, I contrast this with all the books I've read and everything, with what happened there when Kennedy -- I mean, at Parkland.

Here they were doing the autopsy. One of the cardinal rules that I've always heard in -- anytime you get a body in from another jurisdiction, and it has received any medical attention or anything, and you're going to do the autopsy in

another area, you always establish contact and say, "What was done there surgically? What was the condition of the body when you had it?" Of course, we didn't have that.

Now, when I came back in after that phone call about this bullet being found on the stretcher and everything, here was another clue that would have given reason for a call, but that was made Saturday morning. And I think that's sort of unfortunate.

I mean, this -- You're -- For a guy that witnessed the autopsy and seen what went on, I mean, these are my personal reflections.

Q One thing I need to think about in doing this is how the words are appearing on the page. And there's something you said a minute ago, but I'm concerned about how they appear on the page.

A Yeah. Sure.

Q So, I'm going to ask you a question.

A Yeah.

Q Did you have any evidence that there had been an autopsy in Parkland Hospital?

cam

34

A We didn't know a thing that had gone on at Parkland.

Q When you made reference to an autopsy in Parkland, you were not aware of any autopsy that had been --

A I -- No. Did I say autopsy? That's a misquote if it was. There wasn't.

Q Okay. I just want to make sure that --

A No. I mean, any medical. When I said that, I think if they would have called and find out anything done medically over there. Not autopsy.

Q So, in other words, if I can sum up. What I understood --

A Yeah.

Q -- that you were saying is, that your experience in a prior deposition is -- was that contact was made between the autopsy physician and the treating physician.

Whereas, you did not see that that had been done -- you didn't have evidence that that had been done for President Kennedy's autopsy.

A No. In looking back at, you know, when you're involved in something like this, you become a part of it. I've

cam

35

often thought how --

Of course, we all know what went on over at -- there at Texas. The conflict, I mean, about where the autopsy is done. Texas law and all that.

But it -- The smart thing would have been to have done, is to put the doctor -- one of the doctors from Parkland right on Air Force One, go right into Bethesda and say, "Well, here's what we did." Then you're getting off on the right foot.

Q Okay. Let me go back to when you first heard about the assassination. When did you first hear that you would have some responsibility connected with investigation of the assassination?

A Well, this goes back -- O'Neill, his -- one of his regular assignments was contact with Andrews Air Force Base. That involved anything to do with Air Force One, and any type of violations that occurred on the base by civilians, and that type of thing.

So, it was at noon. We had had an inspection of a -- annual inspection of a resident agent that morning. And we had lunch together with the inspectors, Vic Turren and another

man who was down there with him.

And we came back up -- They had gone -- was leaving our resident agency, going over to Silver Spring, which is the other resident agency out of Baltimore that covers the lower part of Maryland, and joins up with D.C. and Virginia.

So, we came back, turned the radio on the standard radio broadcast there, and we heard this broadcast about Kennedy being shot and -- President Kennedy in Dallas.

So, I went right over to the radio. And I picked it up and called the car that contained these two inspectors that were leaving our place and going to Silver Spring, and said:

"Are you aware that we just heard the broadcast that the President was shot in Dallas? Thought we'd let you know.

Maybe you want to alter plans, or call headquarters, or something."

So, then I got in touch -- O'Neill went out to -- Because we had to all be there for that morning inspection. And he went on out to Andrews. And then Major Best, who was in charge of the OSI out there -- they got word

cam

37

that Air Force One was coming in there. And, so, O'Neill called that in to me.

I think I called my boss up there, and told him that I was going up and join Frank out there. And that we'd be -- if he wanted to get in touch with us, get us through OSI there at the base.

Q When you say OSI, you're referring to the Office of --

A Office of Special Investigations in the Air Force --

Q That's the Air Force intelligence.

A Intelligence; right.

Q Okay.

A And, luckily, as I recall what happened, we were out there, and Air Force One was in a traffic pattern. And they were probably on base leg, getting ready to come in on their final approach.

And Tully, my boss in Baltimore, the special agent in charge there, called me and said he just got a call -- I think that was made through the Hyattsville resident agency, too, radio -- that they wanted us to get in the motorcade, go to Bethesda, observe the autopsy, obtain any bullets removed,

hand-carry them to the FBI laboratory to preserve the chain of evidence.

So, that was -- We were already there, because -- We wouldn't have been there, if we hadn't anticipated and gone out there.

And, so, I spoke to Jim Rowley, who was the head of the Secret Service, comparable to Hoover's job with the FBI -- showed him our credentials, told him what our instructions were from the Bureau, and they put us in the number three car of the motorcade.

Q Let me ask you to do the best that you can to think back, and this may be a little bit difficult.

In the media at the time, November 22nd, 23rd, 24th, it was not clear that there had been an autopsy performed at Bethesda. So, if one were to read The New York Times, The Washington Post, that wouldn't necessarily be clear. And I'll just say that for your information.

A Yeah.

Q Now, the question for you is, are you certain there was a discussion about an autopsy, in terms of your orders to

cam

39

go with the President's body to Bethesda?

A I think -- now, I can't be positive on this, but I think that there was something said about an autopsy to be conducted, and we were to witness the autopsy. And I'm almost positive of that.

Q Okay. When Mr. Rowley spoke with you, was he at Andrews Air Force Base?

A Yes. He was right on the scene.

Q All right. Who else did you recognize from the Secret Service who was at Andrews Air Force Base?

A Well, I'll tell you. Things were going, so I don't remember seeing anyone from Secret Service there. And our first contact with them was when we were getting the casket out of the ambulance.

And I went up to Roy Kellerman, and -- and showed him my credentials, and told him our instructions. He said, "Yes." He said, "Jim Rowley has already told us about O'Neill and you being here."

Q Okay. Did you see the casket unloaded from Air Force One?

cam

40

A I believe I did. I think -- because it was unloaded, I guess, and put in the hearse. And we were in the third car.

I don't have any distinct recollection of that, but I'm sure -- I was right down there on the tarmac, and right near the -- where the motorcade was being formed right there --

Q Did you --

A -- by the plane.

Q Did you see the casket actually put into the hearse; do you recall?

A I can't say that I did. I can't -- I don't have that distinct recollection.

Q All right. I'm just corrected that it wasn't a hearse, but a Navy ambulance.

A Navy, yeah.

Q I assume your answer --

A Yeah.

Q -- would be the same.

A Yeah.

Q From the time that you first -- Did you, at any time while you were at Andrews Air Force Base, see the casket in

cam

41

the Navy ambulance?

A No, not while I was at Andrews, because we were getting -- As I say, I was contacting Rowley. And they were getting us placed in the number three car, and --

Q Did you at any point ever see the casket in the Navy ambulance?

A Only when we unloaded it.

Q Okay. Were you able, at least in a general way, to see the ambulance from where you were riding in the third car of the motorcade?

A Well, Suitland Parkway goes out to Andrews Air Force Base. As you know, it's sort of a straight shot. And there were some -- Well, I can't say, because, as I recall, we were in the back seat, O'Neill and I.

I think the President's valet and the lady that was -- had some association with Jackie Kennedy, maybe her secretary -- now, I can't be sure of that -- were in the car.

So, our view was sort of obstructed. I mean, it's not like sitting up where you can look out the windshield and see the ambulance.

But one thing I might mention -- I think I mentioned to somebody else here -- that that rolled. From the time it left Andrews Air Force Base, that motorcade never made one stop until it pulled up in front of Bethesda.

They played leapfrog with the Metropolitan Police Department with motorcycles. And they'd clear one intersection; you'd go through it. They'd play leapfrog, go around and be clearing another. So, it never stopped for anything.

Q When you arrived at Bethesda, did you at that point see -- This is, say, at the front of Bethesda Naval Medical Center -- Bethesda Hospital. Did you see the casket in the ambulance, or was it until -- not until later?

A It -- I -- My recollection is, it went on around, and we followed it. Now, whether riding the car we were in, or whether we went on foot -- Because as I recall it -- I could be wrong, but it wasn't that distance.

But, anyway, we were right there before it was taken out of the ambulance and when I had my conversation with Roy Kellerman. And we helped carry it into the autopsy room.

Q Could you describe how that happened, the -- Now referring to a gray Navy ambulance. Is that -- is that fair?

A That's fair.

Q Okay. Were you there when the door was opened to the ambulance?

A The rear door, you mean?

Q The rear door.

A Yes.

Q And who helped lift the casket out of the ambulance?

A Of course, I've read some stuff about teams and stuff.

And I don't have any recollection of any teams.

I recall there was Kellerman and Greer -- there was the driver -- O'Neill and myself. And there was some others.

There had to be. And I don't know who assisted in that, but we carried it through the door and right on into the autopsy room, and set it on the floor there before it was opened.

Q The floor of the autopsy room, or the floor of the ward, generally?

A Well, it was sort of a anteroom there, I think.

Q Were there any military officials who helped unload

cam

44

the casket with you, as best you recall?

A I can't recall that, either. If there was someone -- And I'm pretty sure there was someone who assisted, but I can't remember any specific officer or anything.

Q Did you place the casket onto any kind of stretcher, or cart, or vehicle that would enable you to roll it; or did you physically carry it?

A I -- As I -- as I recall, I don't think there was any recognized cart there. I think we hand-carried it right in, as well as I recall.

Q Did you stay with the casket from the time that you unloaded it from the ambulance until it was opened, or was it out of your sight at any time?

A I was there until it was opened. I remember the sight when they opened the lid of the casket, and that -- and sheets.

You know, you've heard a lot about body bags. And I'd like to insert one thing here.

I was a squadron commander and a B-24 pilot in World War II. And when I came home, I was a base operations officer.

And that means going out to every crash scene. And I've gone

cam

45

out to those, where they've put bodies in body bags and zipped them up and everything.

Lifton, one time, called and asked me about body bags.

And I told him, "Don't worry about me knowing what a body bag is." I mean, so --

But the body was in sheets.

Q And it was not in a body bag?

A Not there.

Q After the casket was opened, did you have any role in lifting the body out of the casket?

A No, I -- I don't think any of us. I think that was medical technicians or people there that were assigned to the medical unit that put it on the autopsy table.

Q Did you see the body lifted out of the casket and put onto the autopsy table?

A I believe I do. I remember that; right.

Q Now, for --

A That's when -- just before. And then they cleared the room, that I mentioned -- for the photographs and the X-rays was right after that.

cam

46

Q Now, I just want to make sure that we've got a -- I'll call it a chain of custody.

A Yeah.

Q Although, I'm using the term loosely. But you were -- I mean, from what I understand you were saying -- that you were with the casket, at least from the time it was unloaded from the Navy ambulance until the body was lifted out of that same casket --

A Right.

Q -- and put on the autopsy table.

A Yes.

Q And when the body was unwrapped, were you able to identify the body as that of President Kennedy?

A Oh, there's no question.

Another thing, too. During the autopsy, when the body -- I don't remember when that -- There was -- On one side, here was this scar in the lumbar region of the back. And the PT boat incident was -- received so much scar.

But that thick hair and -- And his face wasn't distorted that much. I mean, from -- I mean, you could tell

it was President Kennedy.

Q Could you describe, very briefly, what the casket looked like, if you recall?

A Well, it was a -- Now, there was another thing, about shipping caskets. This was an expensive display-type -- Not display, but --

Q Ceremonial?

A Ceremonial, viewing-type casket. And I remember there was a -- a handle had broken off. Damage. There'd been damage, I think, either in loading or unloading. I don't know which. Loading at Dallas or unloading at Bethesda -- at Andrews.

Q Could you bear with me just a second?

A Sure.

Q Mr. Sibert, I previously showed you a document that was marked 153, which was the notes taken on your interview with Mr. Specter. I'd like you to look at page two of the -- that memorandum, and look at the question.

I will read it for the record, if you could read along with me.

"Question: What was the time of the preparation for the autopsy at the hospital?

"Answer: Approximately 7:17 p.m."

Do you see those words?

A Yes.

Q Can you tell me what your understanding is of the meaning of those?

And if my question is unclear --

A No.

Q -- I can try it a different way.

A As I say, I know there was probably some discussion there about photographs and X-rays. I mean, this would have occurred before.

And this 8:15 is when the first incision, I think, was made -- that that refers to. So, from 7:17 --

And then another thing that was, I think, in one of the other exhibits you showed me. I think there was clearances -- the impression that I had -- that there was clearances being given by maybe Burkley, who was the President's personal physician, Admiral Burkley, or maybe Mrs. Kennedy,

about a complete autopsy.

And there could have been this going on, talking about preparation, because if you're preparing for a complete autopsy, you're probably going to have a little different planning than for the other. So, this could have been -- But --

Q Well, I guess my question, in part, is: Does the time that is provided here, 7:17 p.m., help you identify the approximate time that the casket was unloaded from the Navy ambulance?

A Well, that could have been about the time that it was unloaded, the 7:17 -- or just a short time thereafter when they got it in there. And, of course, they had to take it out of the casket, put it on the -- And this would all be preparation, too.

Q Do you have any independent recollection -- that is, recollection separate from Exhibit No. 153 -- that would tell you approximately when the casket was unloaded from the Navy ambulance?

A You say, any recollection or --

Q Any recollection or knowledge about when -- the time

that the casket was unloaded.

A Because he went -- I wasn't -- I mean, when they started the -- Well, I don't know what -- You weren't looking at your watch too much with all this going on then, but --

Q Sure.

A I know the incision. I checked that. I mean, I had a time on that.

Q What was the time of the incision?

A That was 8:15, I think -- as I recall. I think that was in my 302.

Q As you think back now, approximately how much time had the body been at Bethesda between the time it first arrived and the first incision? Is that, you know, approximately an hour, or half-hour, or --

A I would say somewhere probably between three-quarters of an hour and an hour, somewhere in there.

THE WITNESS: Am I speaking loud enough?

COURT REPORTER: Yes, thank you.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q I'd like to show you a document that has been marked

MD 163 -- which I have no reason to believe that you have seen previously, though.

If you could just take a quick look, and tell me whether you recall having previously seen that document.

MR. GUNN: While Mr. Sibert is looking at that, I will identify the document.

As it appears on its face is entitled The Joint Casket Bearer Team, which is a six-page document, with The Joint Casket Bearer Team appearing to be a cover sheet.

And it is followed by a document entitled Company E Honor Guard, First Battalion, Third Infantry, Fort Myer, Virginia, dated December 10th, 1963.

THE WITNESS: This first time here in paragraph two, is that 1810 hours? That would be 6:10 p.m.; wouldn't it? Yeah. It's blurred. I couldn't tell what --

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Sure. I mean, just -- I mean, the first question will be: Have you previously seen this document before?

A No, I have not.

Q What I'd like to do is draw your attention to a couple

of points on this.

A All right.

Q And see if it helps refresh your recollection --

A Yeah.

Q -- or if you have an opinion on the accuracy of the document.

All right. Under Arabic numeral one, it says --

Let me just state, it appears from its face that this document has certain times that the military honor guard was involved in issues related to the transfer of the body of President Kennedy.

And it refers -- by the way that I would read it, and it is a little bit unclear -- on Arabic numeral one, from the ambulance to the morgue, Bethesda, 2000 hours, 22nd November '63.

Now, that would suggest in military time 8:00 o'clock p.m.

A 8:00 p.m.

Q The document also suggests that there was a casket team that was involved with removing the casket from the

cam

53

ambulance, putting it in the morgue at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Now, I don't know, of course, whether this document is accurate or not accurate.

A Yeah.

Q But this would seem to conflict to some extent --

A Yeah.

Q -- with your own experience. Do you have any information that could illuminate this apparent discrepancy?

A No, I don't.

Q Did you see, at any point at Bethesda Hospital, a military team unloading any casket on the night of November 22nd?

A Not that I recollect.

Q What is your best estimate on the time that it took from -- for the Navy ambulance to get from Andrews Air Force Base to Bethesda Hospital?

A I wouldn't have an estimate on the time. But as I say, there was no delay whatsoever. It just rolled, and at a good rate. I mean -- of speed, I mean.

Q If you can't answer my next question --

A Yeah.

Q -- please don't hesitate to say so. But do you have a sense of whether it was close to an hour, 45 minutes, a half-hour; or is it really difficult to say?

A In thinking of that distance, you'd -- Coming in Suitland Parkway, up East Capitol, on in through the District, up to Bethesda -- or up to --

I can't recall the street that it was on there -- Bethesda is on. Not Wisconsin.

Well, it was certainly -- I would certainly say it would be -- it would have to take, even rolling, more than a half-hour to travel that distance. And -- and then when we got there, we waited a little bit out in front before -- There was a motorcade before it that moved on.

Q Mr. Sibert, could you turn to the third page of the document that you have in front of you, Exhibit No. 163, and look at the portion that is down under Part 2B. Now, I will read that into the record while you're reading along with me.

"While the casket was being removed --" Excuse me.

"While the casket was being moved inside the hospital, Brigadier General McHugh relieved YN/2 Barnum, USCG, from the casket team, and awkwardly took his place.

"After the President's body had been removed from the casket, a mahogany casket was exchanged for the original bronze one. This was necessary because the bronze casket had been scratched and marred from its being poorly handled. A handle on the side was also broken."

A I don't recall McHugh -- General McHugh. I think that was President Kennedy's aide -- Air Force aide, if I recall correctly. And he was listed as being there at the -- during the autopsy. But I don't recall this switch, relieving this other bearer.

And I don't recall this other casket being brought in right then, either. It was exchanged. They don't say any time there; it was soon exchanged or anything. But I don't know what -- Well, that could have been exchanged when the people from Gawler Funeral Home came out, even, to --

Q President Kennedy was buried in a mahogany casket. So, that would make sense for that --

A Yeah.

Q -- for that second casket.

Mr. Sibert, could you look at Exhibit No. 151,
which --

A All right.

Q -- just as a reminder, is the 302 that you
wrote afterwards.

A Yeah, all right.

Q I'd like to draw your attention to page one of the
302, towards the bottom. And I'll just read this into the
record, and you can read along with me.

"A tight security was immediately placed around the
autopsy room by the naval facility and the U.S. Secret Service.

Bureau agents made contact with Mr. Roy Kellerman. The
Assistant Secret Service Agent in Charge of the White House
detail advised him of the Bureau's interest in this matter."

A Yeah, this timing is off there. I -- if I'm dictating
that again. Contact was made, as I said, right before the casket
even came out of the Bureau ambulance. But the tight security,
it -- believe me, it was tight. About every 10 feet they had --

And when I went out to make this phone call over to Chuck Killion, they went right with me. And I passed them in -- into another room there, to use a phone there in another room when I called Chuck. So, it was tight security. I mean, there was no question about that.

Q When you just referred to the Bureau ambulance, did you mean the Navy ambulance?

A Navy ambulance. I'm sorry.

Q Okay. We don't want any --

A No.

Q -- extra ambulances there.

A Yeah, that's -- that's my old age creeping in here.

Q Mr. Sibert, I'd like to show you a document that's been marked 163, that has some photographs of the unloading of the ambulance -- or of the casket at Bethesda -- or at -- I'm sorry --

A Andrews.

Q -- the Andrews Air Force Base.

Can you tell by looking at the photographs of this casket whether that is the casket -- or that appears to be the

cam

58

casket that you unloaded from the Navy ambulance on the night of November 22nd?

A Well, that's a massive-looking type casket, the same type that would --

Q Now, just a moment ago, you referred to the telephone call that you made to Mr. Killion.

A Mm-hmm.

Q Can you tell me, was the phone call made to Mr. Killion before or after the body was unloaded from the casket?

A Oh, that was after the body was -- It was on the autopsy table, and the autopsy was in progress. Because the reason I made that call was that the pathologist said, "There's no exit to this back wound," and probed it with rubber glove -- probe.

Q Okay.

A So, that's when I called and thought maybe there was something -- It wouldn't deteriorate. I mean, there --

Q Do you recall seeing more than one ambulance in the motorcade?

A Nope.

Q Did you see any other ambulances or hearses at Bethesda Hospital on the night of 22nd, other than the one you've referred to?

A No, this -- this is the only one I saw.

Q Do you have any recollection of seeing a helicopter at Bethesda Hospital on the night of the 22nd?

A I know they have the pad there, because we used to get our physicals -- annual physicals there. But I don't recall any helicopter being there that night.

Q Okay. Earlier, we talked about the agents who were involved in unloading the casket. You mentioned Mr. Kellerman, Mr. Greer, and some others. What was the approximate total number of people who helped unload the casket from the ambulance?

A There, again, I say I can't recall. I assume that there had to be more than just the four of us, because that was a heavy casket. I mean -- And, so, there had to be other people there. And I don't recall.

Q Okay. Now, previously, you've said, if I recall correctly, that the autopsy began at approximately 8:15; is that correct?

A That was the first incision.

Q First incision. How much time was there between the time that the body was unwrapped from the sheets and the first incision was made?

A Well, this is the time that you would have had the X-rays and the photographs. And I don't recall. And I think they probably may have waited a little bit to get those X-rays developed.

Now, the photographs were not. They were undeveloped. And not that night -- I mean, they weren't.

But I think that they probably -- And here again, I'm just assuming that they probably wanted those X-rays before they started the real detailed part of the autopsy, you know.

Q What is your best recollection of the time that you left Bethesda on the night of November 23rd -- 22nd/23rd?

A I would say it was sometime between 11:00 and midnight. That's about as near as I can -- And -- Because our -- my car was out at Andrews, and so was O'Neill's. We had to get -- We had to hand-carry this down to the laboratory.

Q When you say "hand-carry this", you're referring

cam

61

to --

A The two fragments in this little jar. Turned those over to Bob Frazier down there.

And then we had to have a clerk drive us out to Andrews Air Force Base from Bureau headquarters over here. And I got in at 4:00 o'clock there at New Carrollton, Maryland.

So, that was the sequence. So, I would say it was between probably 11:00 and midnight that we left there.

And at that time, I might say, that it was our impression that we had -- This receipt -- I guess, you'll get into that missile later on.

But this receipt, we signed it. And we assumed that that -- for all practical purposes, the autopsy was over with, and it would be turned over to the Gawler Funeral Home attendants that were there on the scene.

Q What was --

A We got their names, I mean. So, they had to be there.

Q What was taking place with the body at the time that you left? Were the autopsy surgeons still there? Had Gawler's started working on the body? What was happening?

A Well, the autopsy surgeons were still there. I mean, Boswell, Humes, and Finck. But, of course, we -- we were interested in getting this, and getting it over to the lab.

We didn't -- We knew they were fragments. Probably wouldn't be too valuable in identifying weapons -- I mean, matching them with weapons. But a lot of --

I don't recall much activity, because it was getting things and -- Boswell had been making some drawings there. And Humes had his notes and things. And I think it was a -- sort of a summation getting together, getting the receipt and all that, and the photographs and -- packs of those and everything.

Q But it was your impression that the autopsy had been completed?

A Yeah.

Q And were people from Gawler's doing anything with the body at the time that you left?

A Not that I can recall. No, I don't recall them starting to wheel the body out or anything like that, but --

Because if we had thought there was any more to go on in the way of an autopsy, why, O'Neill and I wouldn't have

left. I mean, it wasn't -- We could have got there -- over there, but we figured that that was termination of the autopsy.

Q During the time towards the beginning of the autopsy when you left the room for the photographs and X-rays, where were you waiting during that time?

A As I recall, we were out in the hall. I -- I met -- I don't -- But they cleared the room for the X-rays. And they were going to -- said they were going to take photographs. So, everybody except the personnel involved in those two functions -- Medical personnel were the only ones who were, theoretically, in there.

Q Okay. I'd like to go back to the time of the first incision. And if you could -- Before the very first incision was made, if you could describe various parts of the body and what you were able to observe at that time. And let's just start with the head, if we could.

Could you give the best description of the wounds to the head that you can, prior to the time that any manipulation or incisions were made by the doctors?

A Well, there was a massive wound -- oh, I'd say right

back in this part of the head.

Q You're touching the part --

A Yeah, right.

Q -- that I would call, in non-medical terms, the cowlick area of the head.

A Yeah, right.

Q Would that be right?

A Right.

Q And the size of this would be something --

A Well, it was difficult to see in this wound, because the hair was just -- And he had thick hair, the President did.

And it was just so blood-soaked and tied together that it was difficult to -- to see any distinct outlines of where these bones had been literally blown out of the skull.

Q Now, it was also your understanding that at the time that you observed those wounds, the photographs had already been taken.

A Yes.

Q Is that correct?

A Mm-hmm.

Q And your own description of the wound was that it was messy and bloody.

A Oh, yeah.

Q And you had -- saw no --

A Right. And the brain matter there and everything, you know, it was --

Q Were you able to tell whether there was any part of the scalp that was actually missing, as opposed to just being torn?

A Well, there was a big -- just a cavity there. I mean, that you could look into. So, in other words, the skull wasn't -- the bones weren't in place. The head --

Q So, both scalp and bone -- scalp and skull were missing at the back part of the head that you pointed to?

A Well, as I recall, it was tissue, of course, in this and -- But there definitely was -- And I think this is -- probably accounts for what Humes mentioned at the first about surgery to the head area. I mean, it was just that apparent that there was that much missing.

Q In terms of the appearance of the wound, did it appear

cam

66

to be jagged, torn? Or was there any part of it that seemed neat and sharp, or --

A No.

Q How would you describe it?

A Well, there again, of course, I just -- you know, you -- I viewed it from this arm's length here. I didn't -- Now, Humes and them, they got right up over it, and Boswell.

But I couldn't tell whether there was any sharp or beveled, or anything like that. It was -- I couldn't -- wasn't in a position to tell that. But you could see this wound. I -- In fact, I even got closer than arm's length there at one time, I think. Right up there.

And I mentioned to Frank after that, I said, "Frank, you realize the serious, confidential, secret, and all types of information that's gone through that brain. And look now."

So, it would have been that close. I mean --

Q I'd like you to imagine, if you could, President Kennedy standing upright.

A Yes.

Q And think of where his ear is. Was there any injury to the part of his head or face that was in front of the ear?

Now, this is -- again, imagine him standing up. So, forwards from the ear.

A Yeah. I don't recall any. Now, I saw it -- Of course, he was laying on it -- lying on his back. But I don't recall too much injury to the facial part of the body itself.

Q Let's say now the part from the ear forward, but not to the face. So, the ear -- the end of the hairline. Was there --

A Yeah.

Q Did you see any injury in that area?

A I don't recall. Of course, here again, the emphasis was on this massive wound. And that might have taken my interest off of any of the other. But I don't -- I don't recall too much that disfigured the face or any injuries that did that.

Q I'd like to show you a copy of the document that, it's our understanding, was prepared by you in 1977 for the House Select Committee on Assassination.

It's attached to our Exhibit MD 85, and it's also

part of what appears, on its face, to be a memo from Jim Kelly and Andy Purdy to Ken Klein, dated August 29th, 1977.

I'd like to show you this document, and ask you whether this is a drawing that you recall having previously made?

A Oh, I don't recall making this --

Q Perhaps not the outline or the silhouette of the document --

A No.

Q -- but indicating where there was an injury.

A Now, this is a -- We're looking at this from the rear view; right? From here?

Q There are two drawings on this page.

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q I'll say for the record, there's a top one that is a profile view. And there's one that appears to be from behind.

A Behind, yeah.

Q Do you recall having made the marks on these --

A No.

Q -- drawings?

A I don't recall that.

Q Do you recall making any drawing or markings on any drawings for the House Select Committee?

A They showed me some stuff that I hadn't even seen before, and that I -- They said, "Have you seen this before?" And I don't recall.

But I don't recall making any -- I think if I would have made this, I would have moved it over a little bit to the right on the back here, rather than dead center.

I may have. I won't say I didn't, because -- But --

Q Could you look towards the bottom right of the page, and tell me whether that appears to be your handwriting?

A Yep. That's my signature; right. 825 James. That's Fort Myers. Isn't that misspelled?

Q On the second page of drawings, is that your signature and --

A Yes.

Q And do you remember either of those figures at all?

A I think there was some mention made of that back wound.

Q When you say "back wound", you're referring to --

A I'm referring to this wound below the shoulders here,

cam

70

with the dot.

Q Okay.

A Now, I may have -- I -- I have no recollection of making that. And that's not too far -- I mean, it's back in the back of the head here. But I think I would have -- probably have moved it a little over to the right.

Q Mr. Sibert, I have here a document that I'm numbering right now, MD 188, which shows the back of a skull.

[ARRB MD Exhibit No. 188 marked for
identification.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q And I'd like to ask you if you'd be willing to draw on that skull, showing the back of a head, approximately where your understanding of the injury -- what you've described as the massive head wound.

A Well, these are teeth here, I guess. But that's just for --

Q Showing it --

A Disregard that; right?

Q That would be showing it from behind.

A From behind. Looking at it from this way, yeah.
Well, I would think -- Of course, this isn't to scale, but something in that --

Q When you say this isn't to scale, you're referring to the drawing itself and not --

A Well, my --

Q -- the mark that you made on it?

A The mark I made, yeah. But it's off to the right is my recollection of that. It wasn't right just in the -- If you draw a midline up from the back of the neck -- the collar, it wouldn't bisect. It would be over to the right.

Q Okay. Now --

A It could be large -- a little larger than that, as I say, but --

Q The wound could have been a little bit larger than what you have drawn there?

A Right.

Q Would you mind putting your initials --

A Sure.

Q -- just right next to that, please?

A Do you want the date?

Q Sure. I think the date is the 11th.

A Oh, I'm sorry.

Q My watch has the 12th. So, I'm wrong, too.

A That's right.

Q So, September 11th, 1997. Thank you.

A Getting behind.

Q With the wound that you have drawn on this document now marked Exhibit 188, was that the largest wound that you saw -- on the skull?

A That was the largest wound. That one with --

Q You referred to, a moment ago, that you were shown some things by the HSCA staff. Do you recall what you were shown?

A I -- I can't even recall that. It seemed like it was some -- I can't remember whether they were schematic drawings, or what they were.

But he said, "Have you ever seen this before?"

And I looked at it. And I said, "No, I haven't."

And that was --

Q Now, were there any other wounds that you could identify as being on the head or skull area from the time before the first incision was made?

A No.

Q Did you see any wounds or injuries on the neck?

A The front of the neck, you're speaking of?

Q Any part of the neck.

A Yeah. This tracheotomy wound, very evident.

Q Okay. Were there any other wounds that you noticed at that time on the body?

A No.

Q Later in -- during the course of the autopsy, did you ever see any additional wounds? So, maybe you did not see them before the first incision.

A No.

Q You referred earlier in this deposition to a wound on -- I think you said below the shoulders.

A Right.

Q Do you recall that?

A Mm-hmm.

Q Can you tell me where that wound was, or describe that for me?

A Well, that drawing you gave me there, it was below the scapula or the shoulders. And down below -- below the base of the neck, down.

Q Okay.

A Now, Humes, as I recall, didn't give any measurement on that. He did on this piece of skull that was brought in and the fragments, but I don't recall -- It was below the shoulders and to the mid -- right of the midline of the body.

Q Okay. When you said just a moment ago the drawing that I had shown you, you were referring to the drawings that were attached to Exhibit No. 85; is that correct?

A Right. The back wound.

Q Okay. From the time that you first saw the body until the time that you left the morgue to return to headquarters and then to Andrews, approximately what percentage of the time were you with the body?

Let's say, other than the time of the photographs and the X-rays, what percentage of the time were you actually

with the body?

A Oh, we went out to eat one time, separately. But I'd say that I was with the body during that time, with the exception of when we were excluded for autopsy -- for the X-rays and photography, I'd say 80 percent or better. More than that, because we -- we were -- both of us were there most of the time.

And when I made the phone call, O'Neill was there.

And when he went out to get a little bite to eat there, I was there. When he -- I went out, he was there.

Q At the time the first incision was made, could you describe approximately how many people were in the room and what the tenor of the room was? Was it sober? People talking, or what was the --

A Yeah. Well, as I say, there was a lot of rank there, and the Bethesda personnel, and -- Of course, everybody was, I think, in an anxious state there. But I don't know what -- I don't -- No, it was just a large -- It wasn't pandemonium or anything, but there was just a large group of people in there.

And some of them came -- as I mentioned in the 302 -- weren't there at the beginning, but they came in to ask a question or get some kind of ruling or something, and went out again. But it was a busy place.

Q Would you characterize it as noisy? Would that be right?

A I would say it was fairly noisy; right.

Q I'd like to ask you about any kind of record that you saw being created that night, and we'll talk about -- more about them later. But you previously made reference to X-rays and photos.

You also said, if I recall correctly, that Dr. Humes was making notes; is that correct?

A My recollection was that he was making some notes. And Boswell, I think, was making some schematic drawings, such as one on that last exhibit. What was that number?

Q Fifty-three, I think. I'm sorry. It was 85.

A Oh.

Q Exhibit No. 85.

A Right.

Q Did you see anyone else taking notes that night?

A No, I don't recall.

Q As between you and Mr. O'Neill, was one of you taking notes rather than the other?

A We both took notes.

Q Okay. Do you recall whether Dr. Finck took any notes?

A I don't recall.

Q Did you --

A I do recall he helped probe the back wound.

Q Do you recall there being any motion picture or video recordings --

A No.

Q -- that were made?

A No.

Q Did you hear -- have any -- ever hear anything about there being any audio recordings at the autopsy?

A No.

Q Did you see any tissue preparations or samples being made, paraffin blocks or things of that sort?

A No.

cam

78

Q Were you at the -- in the autopsy room at any time when photographs were being taken?

A No, I don't think I was.

Q You mentioned it first that they --

A Yeah.

Q -- you left the room while photographs were taken.

I just want to make sure that no photos, as far as you're aware, were taken after the procedures --

A I don't recall any while I was there.

Q After the first round of X-rays was taken, do you recall needing to leave the room again for additional X-rays to be taken -- subsequent X-rays?

A I don't remember being excluded like we were on that first one when X-rays were taken. I don't --

Q Do you remember any discussion among the doctors about the need for performing additional X-rays during the course of the autopsy?

A No.

Q Did you ever see anyone whom appeared to you to be a photographer at the autopsy?

A No.

Q Did you see any cameras at all?

A I don't remember. When they went in there to take photographs with the X-rays, someone may have had a camera.

I -- I don't recall seeing that, but --

Q Did you ever see any film being taken out of the camera and exposed to light?

A No.

Q Do you ever recall having seen any film that was present in the morgue that night that was being labeled, or sent to somebody, or being counted, or anything of that sort?

A No. The only -- was this film that they had packs of there that the -- was turned over to the Secret Service. But none of that -- That was all in packs. I mean, I don't -- didn't see any film.

Q Were you acquainted with what is called large-format review cameras? Do those terms mean anything to you?

A No.

Q In the 302 that you've mentioned, which is marked as Exhibit 151, you record the numbers -- some numbers of films.

Can you tell me where you got those numbers? I'm referring to page five.

A Yeah. Well, it's my recollection that Humes gave us this data. And this was always being -- Of course, he was the chief pathologist. And we copied down what he gave us, the figures.

Q When did you first -- Let me withdraw that. Did you ever see any of the developed X-rays?

A I -- They were brought into the autopsy room. But I didn't get right there and look at the X-rays, because not being a medical person or doctor, they wouldn't have meant a lot to me, I mean. But I know they were brought back, the developed X-rays. And I think they -- Humes used them, if I recall.

Q In your 302 -- again, this is marked as Exhibit 151 to this deposition -- you make reference to the X-rays and some -- what the -- part of what the X-rays show.

A Oh, yeah.

Q The question for you is, what is the source of this information? Is that based upon your own observation, what

you were told, or a combination of both?

A I'm trying to recall whether they had a projector there. And I'm sure that they probably did, but --

Q While you're looking at that --

A Let's see, where was that? That was -- What paragraph was it? Oh, here. Down this, yeah.

Q Let me read part of this for the record, but you can take a look at this yourself.

"X-rays of the brain area, which were developed and returned to the autopsy room, disclosed a path of a missile which appeared to enter the back of the skull. And the path of the disintegrated fragments could be observed along the right side of the skull. The largest section of this missile, as portrayed by X-ray, appeared to be behind right frontal sinus."

A Now, this was all -- As I recall now, this was all given to us by Humes in observing these. It wasn't based on our observations, but his.

Q We have here today the records that we understand to be the original autopsy X-rays. If you observed them that night and would be able to look at them again, I would like

cam

82

to show them to you. If you think that you didn't really see them that night --

A There was one other thing in this connection that, I think, said -- maybe that isn't in the 302, but -- said it looked like the Milky Way. This was metal fragments -- or fragmentized, you know. It was in the skull.

Q I think that that appears in an affidavit that you --

A It may have been, but I remember --

Q -- that you did later.

A -- distinctly remember that.

Q Now, with that description of the Milky Way as the path of disintegrated fragments, did you get that all yourself --

A No.

Q -- from your own observation?

A That was from Humes.

Q So, it wouldn't help you --

A I don't --

Q -- to look at the X-ray?

A No, I don't -- I don't think they showed them to me.

I think Humes was just looking at them and talking, and I was making -- we were making notes as to statements relative to that.

Q The very last sentence of this same paragraph -- Again, it's on page three. It refers to, "The next largest fragment appeared to be at the rear of the skull."

Is that observation, then, also from Dr. Humes?

A That's from Humes; right.

Q Okay. When you looked at the skull and what you have described as including being able to see brain tissue, were you able to see inside the skull cavity, and see the brain inside? Again, this is before the first incision.

A Yeah. I don't recall whether there was -- whether the cavity -- whether -- I think part of the brain was missing, as I recall, or a statement to that effect was made -- due to this explosion. But I don't recall --

Q Do you recall seeing --

A I certainly don't recall seeing an intact brain, you know, like you see on a color photograph in med school or something like that.

Q Were you present during the autopsy when the skull was opened and the brain was removed?

A No.

Q Was the brain removed during the course of the autopsy, as far as you're -- as far as you know?

A Not to my recollection while we were there. It could have been, but I don't have that recollection.

Q Did you ever see a brain at all during the night of the autopsy; that is, somewhat intact brain?

A No.

Q Was there any discussion during the course of the autopsy about the location of the brain?

A Not that I recall.

Q Mr. Sibert, earlier in the deposition, you referred to fragments that you took to FBI headquarters. Do you recall that?

A Yes.

Q Could you describe what the fragments were?

A Well, they were two small fragments that were measured, I think -- I don't recall the size of them; but

cam

85

they're mentioned, I think, in my FD 302 -- or measured by Humes.

And they brought in a little jar. Oh, I would say it's about this tall and -- with a black screw-type cap on it. And Dr. Humes put those in the jar.

And Frank and I initialed -- scraped through the top with our initials and the date, so that we could identify them later on for evidence that we had hand-carried those -- got them from Dr. Humes and hand-carried them over to the Bureau lab.

Q Something has remarkably appeared just behind you right now, a small jar with a black lid.

A Oh, yeah.

Q And I'd like to ask you if that's the jar that you were referring to. And please take your time to examine the lid, and see if you can identify that as being the jar that you just mentioned.

A Living down in Florida, it's a long time since I've worn gloves.

MR. GUNN: Let me state for the record that this is Warren Commission Exhibit No. 843 that Mr. Sibert is examining.

THE WITNESS: Yes. And I'm looking on the top there. That's FXON. That's Frank's initials. 11/22/63. And I'm trying to find mine. I had it just -- Oh, here it is. And JWS, 11/22/63. Those are my initials.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Do you see any other initials or identifiers that you can observe on the top of the lid?

A Yeah, here's one up here: RF. I assume that would be Bob Frazier, probably, that we hand-carried it to over the lab. He's in the laboratory.

Then there's another initial. I can't -- oh. No. It looks like a C, but -- Would that be CK? I don't -- I can't make that one out.

But there -- there's two other initials there, other than Frank and mine. I see four sets of initials.

Q And is this the bottle, then, as best you can tell --

A Yes.

Q -- that was used to carry the fragments?

A I said it was about that size. I was right on that, my recollection. And this black cap, and initialed, and

everything. That's it.

Q Now, we've been referring to two fragments. And although everyone in this room knows what the fragments are that we're referring to, could you identify what kinds of fragments they are?

A They're metal fragments that were removed by Dr. Humes from the skull.

Q Did you see Dr. Humes remove the fragments?

A I don't recall seeing him remove them, no. I'm sure it was done during the autopsy, and he had them there. But he placed them in this.

Q Do you know whether you were in the room at the time the fragments were removed?

A I'm almost certain I was. As I say, I said 80 percent. But I would be willing to go even a higher percentage than -- of that time that we were in --

Q But never --

A -- that I was in there.

Q But, nevertheless, you don't have a recollection of actually seeing the fragments removed?

cam

88

A No, not the -- actually him taking it out of the --

Q Did Dr. Humes tell you where he had located the fragments?

A Yes. In that parietal area there that was mentioned in the 3 -- That was his terminology -- I mean, his statement in connection with getting these.

Q Okay. Did you ever see the fragments again after the night of November 22nd/23rd?

A Never again after that.

Q Okay. I'd like to show you a document that is marked MD 69, and ask you whether you have seen that document previously?

MR. GUNN: I will state for the record that MD 69 appears on its face to be a memo from Francis X. O'Neill and James W. Sibert to Captain J.H. Stover, dated 22 November 1963.

THE WITNESS: Yes, I recall. I'd like to state a little further on this. Here, we get to this term "missile".

Now, some things I've read about the agents giving a receipt -- This receipt was prepared by Navy personnel. I think a Navy corpsman typed it up.

And this terminology and everything is U.S. Navy about the missile. Now, had I been preparing a -- making out a receipt and giving it to them, I would have said "fragments" here.

This is another thing that's been kicked around a lot in books and everything. I had a -- I've got some notes here from a guy who called me about this very thing, a missile.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Other than the document that's now marked Exhibit No. 69, did you sign any other receipts on the night of November 22nd/23rd related to fragments or missiles?

A No. Not --

Q So, to the best of your recollection --

A To the best of my recollection on this, this is the only receipt that was signed.

Q And the document that we have here, Exhibit 69, was attached in a sense to Commission Exhibit 843 --

A Right.

Q -- the bottle that's in front of you.

A Right. Referring to that.

MR. GUNN: Let me go off the record for a minute while

Steve takes the bottle.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. GUNN: Okay. Back on the record.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Mr. Sibert, during the time that you were present at Bethesda Naval Hospital, did you speak at all to any other personnel at the FBI by telephone?

A Agent Killion was the only one that I -- Is that who you referred to?

Q That would be one --

A Right.

Q -- one possible.

A When I called him over in the firearms section.

Q Other than Agent Killion, is there any other person with -- any other FBI official with whom you spoke by telephone that night?

A I don't recall. Don't recall speaking with any other person.

Q Do you know whether Special Agent O'Neill spoke with anyone at FBI during the night of the autopsy?

cam

91

A Frank wasn't with me when I made this call here. He was -- as I say, he was back in the autopsy room. And I don't recall Frank making any calls to anyone over at headquarters or laboratory.

Q I would like to show you a document that is marked Exhibit No. 176, which appears on its face to be a letterhead memorandum, dated November 22nd, 1963, from A.H. Belmont to Mr. Tolson. We have the original of the document here.

Although it's my presumption that you have not seen the original document before --

A No.

Q -- I'll, nevertheless, ask you --

A Yeah.

Q -- if you have seen the document?

A Well, this is the first this information has come to my attention.

Q Mr. Sibert, I'll note that the document appears on its face to be dated November 22nd, which -- I don't know whether that date is correct or not.

A Let's see. Was that '63?

Q November 22nd, '63.

A Yeah.

Q The stamps on the back have various times that offices received that. The earliest one I can see right now on the back of this is November 23rd, 1963 at 5:00 p.m., though there may be another one.

A Yeah.

Q I'm not certain whether this document was, in fact --

A Yeah.

Q -- prepared on November 23rd. There is reference, I note, however, in the first paragraph that there was --

"The Secret Service had one of the bullets that struck President Kennedy, and the other is lodged behind the President's ear. And we are arranging to get both of these."

The question would be: Do you recall having been, directly or indirectly, the source of that information for Mr. Belmont?

A When I talked with Killion that night -- I mean, asking first of all, "Chuck," I said, "is there any kind of a bullet that would completely fragmentize? Maybe hit a bone and go

down in the lower extremities of the body?" And I said, "They -- the doctors can't find a bullet." And I said, "They're at a loss to --"

He said, "Well, you heard about the bullet that they found on the stretcher over in Dallas."

And I said, "No, I hadn't."

He said, "Well," he said, "the Secret Service is bringing that bullet in to the laboratory."

They didn't know whether it was on Kennedy's stretcher or on Connally's, but it was on its way in.

So, this -- I went back and relayed this to Humes at the time, because I thought it was something that he'd probably want to know. I thought he might even want to call Burkley or --

But that -- Now, if that's the basis, I wouldn't know. But, as I say, I've never seen this communication before.

And Shanklin, I mean --

But -- but the --

Q The question particularly is the --

A -- the one behind the -- lodged behind the President's

cam

94

ear, that's news to me. That -- I'd never heard that before.

Q So, as far as you were aware, that information -- that there was a bullet lodged behind the President's ear -- is incorrect?

A Yeah.

Q Okay.

A Nothing was mentioned at the autopsy about that.

Q I would like to turn to an issue that you raised yourself earlier regarding the statement in your 302, our Exhibit No. 151, related to surgery of the head area.

Could you recount for us your best recollection of what the words were that Dr. Humes used when he made reference to that?

A Well, that was it. It was just a real short statement. And when the sheets were removed off the body --

As I said before, I can't whether it was when the body -- before the body was removed from the casket, or whether it was after it was removed from the casket and placed on the autopsy table.

And Humes said, "There's been a tracheotomy,

and -- apparent tracheotomy and surgery in -- or in the head area," I mean. And that was it.

And as I say, I -- it was cursory notes that were being made during the autopsy.

Q Did you ever hear Dr. Humes say anything like, "I am mistaken." That there was not surgery around the head area?

A No.

Q Did he ever say anything --

A As I said a while ago in connection with this, that has haunted me; that I didn't think at the time to ask him when that piece was brought in that they found in the limousine out in Dallas: "Now, could this have -- Does this any way alter your first conception about surgery to the head area?"

It might have saved a lot of time, and books, and --

Q I'd like you to refer now, if you would, to -- again Exhibit No. 151 -- to the second paragraph on page number five.

And I'll read that into the record.

"Also, during the latter stages of the autopsy, a piece of the skull, measuring 10 by 6.5 centimeters, was brought to Dr. Humes, who was instructed that this had been removed

from the President's skull."

Do you see those words?

A Mm-hmm.

Q Now, in this particular passage here, there's no reference made to a piece of the skull being found in the limousine, but refers to something that was removed from the President's skull.

Were you, in fact, told at the time that the piece arrived that it was removed from the President's skull?

A I -- I'm trying to think. There was an agent that brought that in -- I think, a Secret Service agent -- during the latter stage of the autopsy. Maybe he used that terminology, and we picked it up there. But that, again, is --

I didn't get this from Killion, because he wouldn't -- didn't have anything to do with that. But I don't know where that word "removed" -- what -- how that -- But that was -- Evidently, the terminology was used that night.

Q Certainly, as I'm sure is apparent to you, that the question here is: When the explanation was made that the piece of the skull came from the limousine rather than having been

cam

97

removed, it would be plausible to say that -- or one might read this as saying, at the beginning of the autopsy, there's a presumption that there was surgery in the top of the head.

Later in the autopsy, when it -- when the piece arrives, it is assumed that that is --

A Yeah.

Q -- the piece that was removed from skull. There isn't any explanation --

A No.

Q -- as far as I'm aware, in the 302 about this being found in a limousine or being anything other than having been removed from the skull.

A I think that was relayed later by -- I don't know where I got that. And I didn't -- No, I couldn't -- couldn't clarify that any further.

Q Do you remember -- I'd like to show you a document that is marked Exhibit 149. And I will describe it while you're taking a look at it.

A All right.

Q And my question to you will be whether you have

previously seen this document?

It appears on its face to be a teletype, dated 11/23/1963, from SAC, Baltimore to Director and SAC, Dallas.

Mr. Sibert, do you recall having previously seen the document marked Exhibit 149?

A No, I've never seen this before.

Q Could you help me with understanding part of the document? What do you understand this document to be, at least in general? Not the specific content, but what kind of FBI document is it?

A Well, this was sent on the -- Saturday, the 23rd, the day after the autopsy. And --

Q And this is -- went on a teletype machine; is that right?

A Yeah, the teletype out of our headquarters in Baltimore into -- to Bureau headquarters in D.C.

Q Right -- If you read along the top, where the teletype -- It says "urgent". What does that signify?

A It's been so long, but -- Top priority. I mean, it goes out. It didn't -- doesn't get stacked up in a line

cam

99

of teletypes. It might be administrative stuff going out. That this would be given priority treatment.

Q If you look just to the right of the 11/23/63, there's a 2-00. Do you know what that signifies?

A No, I don't.

Q The next two, if you keep going across, there's an "AM TRC". Are you able to tell what those are?

A Hmm-mm. [Shakes head from side to side.]

See, I'll tell you one reason. Working in the Hyattsville and everything, everything went into headquarters. Your headquarters -- your teletype machines and your operators were there. And that's the reason I'm not familiar with that terminology or what the stuff would signify.

Q Are you able to tell whether the 2-00 signifies 2:00 a.m., or that would be 2:00 o'clock in the morning?

A Hmm-mm. [Shakes head from side to side.]

Q Could you look at the end of the teletype, the next to last line, where it says, "2-07 AM. OK FBI WA JR." Are you able to tell me what any of that would signify?

A Well, probably a time. It looks like it would

cam

100

be -- "2-07 AM", that would be the time. And then they got a hold of headquarters.

And this "WA Junior", I assume, would be the teletype operator in Baltimore that's sending this thing.

Q Would it -- would it --

A As I say, I've never operated the -- Well, I won't say I've never operated a teletype machine, because one time on Saturday, duty agent, I sent out one or something. But, I mean, really have a working knowledge of your -- how they symbolize the entries on that --

Q Does it appear to you, as you look at this now, as though this teletype was, in fact, sent at approximately 2:00 a.m. on November 23rd?

A Oh, I don't know about the top. But the -- there on the 2-07 -- I mean, maybe that was the -- I don't know, but maybe it was beginning. Maybe it took them seven minutes to send this thing. And the acknowledgement down here at the bottom, 2-07 would be the termination of the teletype. I mean, that -- that's the only --

Q One possibility would seem -- And I don't know here.

cam

101

The third line from the bottom, it says "And acknowledge, please." Which would be coming from SAC, Baltimore.

And then the response is, "2-07 AM OK FBI." And that would be somebody, of course --

A Oh, wait a minute. WA. I'll bet you, 2-0 -- In other words, "2-07 AM OK." They have received a message in headquarters.

Q FBI Washington.

A FBI Washington.

Q Right.

A And I don't know what the JR would -- Oh, that's probably the person that received it back here. That would probably --

Q Now, all of this would suggest, then, this document was probably created somewhere around 2:00 a.m. on the morning of November 23rd?

A Yeah.

Q So, again, according to the times that we --

A I don't remember, thinking back again -- As I say, I got in at 4:00 o'clock Saturday morning. I know I didn't

cam

102

get my boss out of bed at 4:00 a.m. in Baltimore, but I -- I don't think that -- I'm trying to --

I do know that that Saturday morning I called them, and asked them if they wanted us to come in. See, Monday was a day of mourning, if you recall, and everything shut down.

I said, "Do you want us to come in and dictate this FD 302 Monday, and bring in a steno off of annual leave?" I mean --

And so Tully, my boss, said, "Well, let me --" "Jim," he said, "let me call headquarters."

And he called over. And he said, "No." He said, "Get in the first thing Tuesday and dictate it."

So, I don't know what -- why this would have been sent out at -- And I don't -- It would -- What they're getting there, it seems like a summation of what went on there at the autopsy. I mean, the metal fragments and everything.

And I can't recall -- I didn't call from Bethesda. I didn't -- I don't think I called -- I know I didn't call from over at headquarters there at that firearms lab.

I may have called the night duty agent. See, you have a night duty agent on, too. I may have called him, and give him this. And then he may have called somebody there and said, "Send a teletype." I don't know.

Q Let me read the first sentences to you of the second paragraph, and you can read along --

A Yeah.

Q -- with me. I read this as saying:

"Total body X-ray and autopsy revealed one bullet entered back of head, and thereafter emerged through top of skull. Pieces of skull, measuring -- excuse me. Piece of skull measuring 10 by 6.5 centimeters later flown in from Dallas hospital, and X-rays Bethesda disclosed minute metal fragments in this piece where bullet emerged from skull."

Do you see those?

A Disclosed minute metal fragments. Going back to my 302, that probably comes back to here -- to my FD 302, on page five, where --

"This section of skull was X-rayed. At which time, it was determined by Dr. Humes that one part of this section

cam

104

revealed minute medical -- metal particles. And inspection of this same area disclosed a chipping of the top portion of this piece. Both of which indicated that this had been point of exit."

Now, as I say, I don't -- See, this FD 302 hadn't been dictated yet on the -- That was dictated on the 26th, if you notice --

Q Yes.

A -- on the front part there. And as I explained the delay there, that day of mourning and that we had checked, did they want it dictated sooner? And they said no.

Q Now, I'm not aware -- and I don't know the answer, but it would seem mostly like that either you or Special Agent O'Neill --

A Yeah.

Q -- would be the source --

A Yeah.

Q -- of this information to Baltimore. Do you have any understanding of who else, besides you or Mr. O'Neill, could have provided that information?

A No. It would have to emanate from the Baltimore agents, I mean, that were there.

Q Now, there's a reference in this teletype to the skull fragment coming in from the Dallas hospital. Do you recall any discussion at the time of the autopsy to --

A No.

Q -- this fragment coming from the Dallas hospital?

A Rather than the limousine that we were discussing? Well, I don't --

Now, Secret Service -- Of course, Kellerman was there and -- who was the ranking Secret Service officer. He was the Assistant Agent in Charge of the White House detail.

And maybe when it came in, it would have been given to him, or something would have been said to him. But I don't even recall him -- It could have been -- he could have said something about this. But I'm just blank on that.

Q I would like -- Mr. Sibert, I'd like to show you a document that we have marked MI 15, which is a page from the House Select Committee on Assassinations. And this document

purports to show three pieces of skull fragment that arrived in the autopsy room at the night of the assassination.

First, if you look at the larger piece that is somewhat triangular shaped, are you able to tell now whether that looks roughly similar to the --

A Wound?

Q -- piece that you saw? To the -- to the fragment that came in --

A Yeah.

Q -- from Dallas?

A Yeah, I'm trying to think. But I don't recall Humes exhibiting that to us there at the autopsy, that larger piece. And that my recollection is, that's the only piece that came in that night that I'm aware of.

Q So, you don't remember seeing it during the autopsy yourself?

A I don't remember getting close up, or seeing it in Humes' hand, or -- Maybe I've got bad memory, but --

Q And you -- Also, from what I understand you're saying, that you don't remember there being more than one

fragment that arrived during the course of the autopsy?

A I only remember the one piece being mentioned.

Q Okay.

A The large piece.

Q Did Dr. Humes make any statement about where the fragment that arrived from Dallas should properly be placed in the head -- from where did it come on the head?

A No.

Q Did you ever understand that he attempted to put that fragment back into the skull, to identify where it came from?

A Only what I've read -- I mean, out of the JAMA, Journal of American Medical Association. When Humes, Finck, and Boswell were interviewed, I think it mentioned there they stayed till 5:00 in the morning. Well, we -- see, we weren't there.

With the morticians and reconstructing, I think -- if I remember correctly, there's -- probably prepare it for --

Q During --

A -- the casket. Pardon me.

Q I'm sorry.

During the course of the autopsy, did the doctors

cam

108

ever discuss the location of an entrance wound in the skull that you recall?

A You mean, other than the one there that went in and that blew out -- exit.

Q Just -- The question is whether you heard them discuss where --

A No, I never heard --

Q -- an entry --

A A separate entrance wound in the skull? Is that your --

Q No. I don't mean --

A Oh.

Q There may be confusion here. I just mean any discussion at all, right now, about any entrance wound into the skull.

A No.

Q They didn't describe -- discuss that, as far as you're aware?

A Hmm-mm. [Shakes head from side to side.]

Q Did you ever hear them discuss an exit wound in the

cam

109

skull?

A No, other than this one -- the two shots, I mean, there that night. In the back -- the shoulders, and the one that hit and then took part -- this -- evidently, took this large piece out. That's the only thing that --

Q Now, I think we may be miscommunicating a little bit.

A Oh, okay.

Q Let me go back and just make reference to Exhibit No. 149. Just -- We'll refer to the first sentence on the second paragraph, where it says:

"Total body X-ray and autopsy revealed one bullet entered back of the head, and thereafter emerged through top of skull."

So, now, my question is really no more complicated than, did you hear the doctors discuss where the bullet wound -- or where the bullet entered the back of the head?

A Where it -- Specific place where it entered?

Q Yes.

A I don't recall that. I -- Just that general statement.

Q So, they said it entered the back of the head.

A Yeah, yeah.

Q But nothing more specific.

A Yeah.

Q Did they ever attempt, or did you hear any discussion about attempting to measure the size of the entry wound?

A No.

Q Did you ever hear any discussion about beveling of the skull? Sound familiar?

A No.

Q Did you hear any discussion about the estimated size of the bullet that struck the head?

A No.

Q Did you see any of the doctors insert probes into the head, in an attempt to determine angle or entry of a bullet into --

A Into the head?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q Did you ever see any probes used at all during the

cam

111

night of the autopsy to determine either depth of the wound or an angle of the -- of the wound?

A Well, the back wound, a probe was used there. A chrome probe.

Q Okay.

A And as I recall, I think Finck used that chrome probe.

Q But you don't remember the chrome probe being used in the head at all?

A Not in the head area, no.

Q Was there ever -- Did you ever hear any discussion about the angle in which the bullet hit the skull?

A No.

Q What the measurements would be? We'll get to the back wound later --

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q -- but just the skull.

A No. No.

Q Let's turn to what we've been calling the back wound. When was it first -- When, during the course of the autopsy, was it first discovered that there was a wound in what you've

been calling the back?

A Well, I don't think it was right in the initial start of the autopsy. I know it was after the original incision and everything.

But when they raised him up, they -- then they found this back wound. And that's when they started probing -- I mean, with the rubber glove and the finger, and -- and also with the chrome probe.

And that's just before, of course, I made this call, because they were -- I mentioned, there they were at a loss to explain what had happened to this bullet. They couldn't find any bullet.

And there's -- they said, "There's no exit." Finck, in particular, said, "There's no exit." And they said that you could feel it with the end of the finger -- I mean, was the depth of this wound.

So, when I made the call and came back, that's when Dr. Humes brought up about the possibility of, through cardiac massage, it worked its way out over there.

Q Did Dr. Finck offer a suggestion as to what he thought

the angle of the bullet was when it entered the body?

A Humes -- it's my recollection -- was the one that said it was a 45- to 60-degree angle.

Q I'd like to show you a document that is marked as MD No. 1, and ask you whether you've seen it before?

I'll state for the record that it is generally referred to as the autopsy face sheet, dated November 22nd, 1963.

A Here's where I've seen it before. Yellow with age.

Q You're showing us a copy of a newspaper --

A Yeah.

Q -- that you brought with us.

A And this -- this was October the 7th of 1975. And, let's see, what -- The Enquirer, I guess. Yeah.

But this is -- has -- This must be -- has Dr. Burkley's signature here. Here's these -- a location up here, 15-6. So, that's the only other time I -- See, I don't recall seeing it that night.

Q Earlier, you said that you were -- that you recalled Dr. Boswell making drawings --

A Mm-hmm.

Q -- is that right? These are not the drawings that you're referring to; is that correct?

A Well, he was -- I -- Here again, during the course of the autopsy, I think Boswell was sort of keeping a record, and this face sheet here and everything.

But whether this was exhibited to me during the autopsy -- I think my first recollection is that, here. That's the first time I've seen that.

Q In the newspaper article?

A Right.

Q Could you turn to the second page --

A Okay.

Q -- of Exhibit No. 1, and tell me whether you recall having seen that on the night of the autopsy?

A No, I don't recall seeing that the night of the autopsy, or any other time.

Q Okay.

A Except now.

Q Let me state also for the record that in deposition

testimony both Drs. Humes and Boswell have identified this as being the face sheet from President Kennedy's autopsy. And they have identified the wound marked here, on what appears to me to be the upper back, as being the bullet entry wound.

If you could just look at that -- the drawing. Again, this is the right side of the face sheet on the first page. Does the location of the -- what they've identified as the entrance wound appear to you to be roughly correct?

A Yes.

Q Were you aware of any time during the autopsy when the chest cavity of Dr. -- excuse me -- of President Kennedy was opened in a search for the bullet that went into the back?

A I don't recall.

Q So, for example --

A As I say, they probed it with the finger and the chrome probe. And that was the statement, "There's no exit." I don't remember any search inside the body cavity -- chest cavity in there for the --

Q Do you remember the chest cavity ever having been opened during the course of the autopsy, so the internal organs

would be exposed?

A No. No, I do not remember it being opened. That --

Q I'd like to show you a document marked No. MD 156, which is faint. And I apologize, but that's the best that we have on that document.

And I'll state for the record, it appears on its face to be a memorandum, dated November 26th, 1963, from Special Agents Sibert and O'Neill to SAC, Baltimore.

A Yeah. This was on the same date that we dictated the 302. I don't know what was -- whether there was an inquiry, or a call from headquarters, or what. But --

Q Is this a memorandum that you wrote --

A Yes.

Q -- jointly with --

A O'Neill.

Q -- Agent O'Neill?

Now, I note on this, in the second paragraph, it states that -- what I understand to be the opinion of Dr. Humes -- that the bullet was still in the President's body, and could only be extracted through a complete autopsy, which he proposed to

do. Do you recall any discussion of that issue?

A No further than what's stated here. I know that the authority for these autopsy proceedings was, evidently, coming through Burkley and probably from Mrs. Kennedy. And --

Q The way -- I'd like to characterize this memo. And please correct me --

A All right.

Q -- if I'm incorrect in any part of this.

It's my understanding that, at least at some point, Dr. Humes felt that he was not able to identify what happened to the bullet.

A Yeah.

Q And that he then said that he needed to have a more complete autopsy, which presumably would be opening up the chest cavity. And that he requested permission for that, and that permission was subsequently granted for that.

Is that a reasonably fair characterization of the --

A I would think so, yes.

Q Do you remember, subsequent to -- Well, first, do you remember now what your source of information was on this?

That it's something Dr. Humes told you; something you witnessed; or something that someone told you later?

A Humes didn't tell us on this, I know. And it was pointed out in this -- it said here that Kellerman and Sibert and O'Neill --

And here again, I don't recall. They might have -- somebody might have said to us, "Well, from an investigative standpoint, don't you think this should be done?"

And we agreed with Humes.

But in reading it, as I say, that's hazy, too, as to --

Q Now, in this document, Exhibit No. 156, there is no statement that the full autopsy was actually done. It simply states that it could be done, or that permission was given to do that.

Do you recall whether you knew anything additional, as to whether more of an autopsy was performed subsequent to this information?

A Only from what I've read in -- like these -- this JAMA articles there, where they stated that they stayed there

until early hours of the morning -- I guess, all three autopsy physicians did -- working with the Gawler's attendants, but --

And I'm wondering, too, if not -- I'm trying to place the timing here. Now, I've -- We came back with the -- It's in my 302, that -- when we were told about this bullet being found on the stretcher over at Parkland.

And Humes said it was clear that -- about these bullets, and the one in the back had been probably worked out by cardiac manipulation over there at Parkland. That was in my 302. Maybe he was satisfied then, and decided that was -- I think that was right towards the end, before we gave the receipt for this jar and headed off for the laboratory.

But I think he was convinced in his own mind that that's what had happened. You'd had this head wound. You had -- And the back wound, there was no exit. And the -- it had been found on the stretcher, and this was the same bullet.

And --

Q Was there any discussion during the part of the autopsy that you attended related to the throat wound in the anterior or the front part of the throat having any connection

with any bullet entries or exits?

A No, not at all. That was taken as a straight tracheotomy.

Q Did you see any incisions, or enlargements of, or any medical procedures around -- related to the anterior neck wound?

A No. It was very evident -- I mean, the wound itself -- I mean, where the tracheotomy had been made.

Q But the doctors, during the autopsy, didn't do anything --

A No.

Q -- with that, that you observed?

A No.

Q Earlier in the deposition, you stated that the first incision was at approximately 8:15. When you say "the first incision", what are you referring to? What's the procedure that you were talking about?

A I've thought about that, too, whether it was the Y incision or -- I know, in other autopsies I've witnessed, I mean, that's generally the first. In fact, in this bullet

cam

121

wound -- when they did a Y incision, you know. I think that's probably what I had reference to.

I -- Because they didn't -- Well, there was no other incisions they would have made. They didn't make any incision on the back. They didn't make any in the head area. So, that's the only thing, I think, that it could have been.

Q I was under the impression, though, from what you'd said earlier, that you didn't see any opening of the chest cavity.

A Well, I thought you meant going into -- behind the ribs or that --

Q Oh, I just mean any. Any opening at all in the chest cavity.

A Oh, yeah.

Q Did you see a Y incision on President Kennedy?

A I -- I can't state positive on that. But I don't know why I would have put "first incision made" there in my notes, if it hadn't been the Y incision.

Q Do you remember there being any cutting of the scalp at all, to pull back the scalp to examine the skull?

A No, I don't recall any.

Q What I think I'd like to do now is get some of the autopsy photos, and show them --

A All right.

Q -- to you, and ask you a few questions about them.

MR. GUNN: Let's take a short break.

[Recess.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Mr. Sibert, we have some photographs here that we'd like to show you. And I will proceed through them in the order as they were identified in the November 10th, 1966 inspection.

The first photograph that you'll be taking a look at is identified as the first view, which is the "left side of head and shoulders", Color Photograph No. 29.

Could you take a look at that photograph, and tell me whether that is how President Kennedy appeared to you on the night of November 22nd, 1963? Again, that is the left profile.

A Yes.

Q Do you recall now whether there was a metal

cam

123

stirrup -- a term I'll use, for lack of a better term -- under President Kennedy's head that supported it?

A No, I don't recall.

Q Is there anything that appears to you to be unusual or different from what you would expect in a photograph of President Kennedy at the autopsy with Photograph No. 29?

A I don't recall the support at all.

Q Okay. Would you have a look now at Color Photograph No. 26, the second view, which is described as the "right side of head and right shoulder"?

Mr. Sibert, is that how President Kennedy appeared to you on November 22nd, 1963?

A Yes, it was that serious a wound. Here again, I don't -- I can't recall that support.

Q Now, I notice that there is a part of the wound that seems to go right into the forehead, above the right eye. Do you recall the wound having extended that far forward?

A I don't recall. As I say, the greater percentage of my time, I think, was back in the position I'm in here now -- looking from the rear, rather than from the front. And

I don't -- My recollection was that the -- I don't know whether this is a flap down there or --

Q You're referring to the --

A Yeah, that's down on the forehead.

Q -- part at the top, towards the back of the head?

A That's down on the forehead. I'm talking about this part here.

Q Oh, on the forehead.

A Yeah.

Q It appears to me that it -- the part that points toward the forehead is triangular shaped. And the lines are quite sharp and distinct, rather than ragged. Again, I ask -- or mention that.

Does that refresh your recollection, or does that seem different from what you recall?

A You mean these lines?

Q The triangular lines --

A Oh.

Q -- right above the right eye.

A Uh-huh.

Q You're only seeing two parts of it, so --

A Yeah. I can't recall.

Q In the portion that is immediately above the left ear -- that is, above to the -- as if President Kennedy were standing up -- there's also another fragment that's not clear what that is.

Is that familiar to you? The right ear.

A I don't recall that, either. It looks like a piece of tissue that's maybe been brought down.

Q But looking at the photograph as a whole, you would say that that roughly corresponds with your recollection?

A Right, yeah.

Q Okay. Let me ask you about -- Do you recall there being a towel under President Kennedy's head during the course of the autopsy?

A I don't have any distinct recollection as to what was under his head. That looks like a medical -- U.S. or something there, a U. It may be a towel or something. I don't -- I don't recall.

Q Okay. Could we look at now Photograph No. 32, which

is identified as the third view and the "superior view of head"?

Mr. Sibert, does that photograph correspond to you to what you observed on the night of the autopsy?

A Well, to the best of my recollection, it does.

Q I'd like to show you Exhibit No. 188. That is the drawing that you made earlier today, showing the size of the wound, which -- By my very rough estimate, the wound that you drew seems much smaller.

A Much smaller, yeah. It was -- it's larger than that. It was a larger wound than that. I should have made that larger, but I'm not much of an artist.

Q Okay. Could we now see the fifth view, the "right anterior view of head and upper torso, including tracheotomy wound"? Photograph No. 40.

Mr. Sibert, does the tracheotomy wound appear to you to be approximately the size that you remember it from the night of the autopsy?

A I -- I think it was pretty pronounced like that, yes.

Q Does that size appear to be -- appear to correspond to your recollection? Does that seem larger or smaller?

A I -- I think that's approximate.

Q Okay. If we could now look at the sixth view, which is described as the "wound of entrance in right posterior occipital region". Photograph No. 42.

Mr. Sibert, does that photograph correspond to your recollection of the back of President Kennedy's head?

A Well, I don't have any -- I don't have a recollection of it being that intact, as compared with these other pictures.

I mean, all we -- I don't remember seeing anything that was --

Q Does that --

A That's why his head is raised here. It's been elevated; hasn't it? Yeah. But still, that -- that wound was back here. Of course, the hair looks like it's been straightened out a little bit to what it was.

Q Do you remember earlier in the deposition when I asked you if -- when you observed the body immediately after the photography -- photographs had been taken, if the hair had been cleaned or combed in any way?

And as I recall, you said, no; that it still seemed pretty messy.

A Yeah. During the rest of the autopsy, it did.

Q So, does that photograph correspond to what you recall from the autopsy of President Kennedy?

A From what I saw, I -- I didn't really see -- recall seeing anything that was this neat -- I guess, is the best word to use -- as compared with what I observed that night.

Q I'm going to show you again the drawing that you made, No. 188 --

A Yeah.

Q -- where you have drawn a wound, which just a moment ago you said was even larger --

A Yeah, that's --

Q -- than here.

A That's -- I'd -- I would redraw that there. That's not large enough.

Q But do you see anything that corresponds --

A No, I don't.

Q -- in Photograph No. 42 to what you observed during the night of the autopsy?

A No. I don't recall anything like this at all during

the autopsy. There was much -- Well, the wound was more pronounced. And it looks like it could have been reconstructed or something, as compared with what my recollection was and those other photographs.

Q So, for the -- with this photograph --

MR. GUNN: Or actually maybe, Steve, if we could look at No. 43, which is a very similar view.

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Again, this is a somewhat different exposure --

A Yeah.

Q -- but a view of the same thing.

A Yeah. I'd make the same statements relative to this photograph as I did for the other.

Is this a piece of tape on his ear here?

Q That has been previously identified as a flap from the skull.

A It is. It's overlapping the -- this part of the ear.

Q So, in conclusion, would it be fair to say that the photograph that we have been looking at -- photographs we have been looking at from the sixth view do not correspond with what

you observed on the night of the autopsy?

A Right. These four. And that is -- Again, I say, I was in error there. That was a much larger wound than that.

Q Now you're referring to --

A This.

Q -- your Exhibit No. 188.

A Right, right. Yeah.

Q And you think that the wound should have been much larger than the one that you drew.

A Yeah.

Q As you look at Exhibit No. 188, would you put the location of the wound in any different location? Is it still -- You have it --

A It would still, I think --

Q -- to the right of center.

A -- still, I think, be to the right. But much larger than what I've shown there.

Q What I'd like to do is let you make a dotted line --

A All right.

Q -- of where you would now estimate the size of the

cam

131

wound.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Mr. Sibert, now does the -- do the dotted lines roughly correspond with your best current recollection --

A Yeah.

Q -- of the size of the wound?

A Yeah.

Q Could you go back to the table and look at the photograph that shows what has been described as "missile wound of entrance in posterior skull, following reflection of scalp"? Photograph No. 44.

Now, I should probably tell you that people have had difficulty orienting this.

A Yeah, I'm having a little --

Q So, if you do, you shouldn't feel unusual.

A Shouldn't feel bad, huh?

Q But let me just ask the question. Are you able to identify with any reasonable certainty what Photograph No. 44 depicts?

cam

132

A Well, I'm trying to get orientated which is the front and --

Q And I'll tell you again just for comfort, that is what every person who has looked at that has said. So --

A Yeah. I don't recall anything that night that I can associate.

Q Part of the question that we have is, you had described the photographs as being taken before the first incision. And this photograph appears to many people to have been taken after the scalp was pulled back, which would mean, presumably, after the first incision.

A Yes.

Q So, just the question that we are trying to determine is whether this photograph was taken prior to the autopsy --

A Yeah.

Q -- or after the autopsy was underway?

A Well, I don't -- Of course, I didn't see the photographs taken then between then and now.

Q Sure.

A But I don't recall anything that appeared like that

during the autopsy.

Q At any point during the autopsy?

A Yeah.

Q Okay.

MR. GUNN: Thank you, Steve.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q What I'd like to do is show you Exhibit 151, which we made previous reference to.

Let me ask you a couple of background questions about the preparation of 302s. And I say this --

A Yeah.

Q -- without reference to this particular one.

A Yeah.

Q But just what the regular procedure was, if you go out to observe some event. Do you usually -- would you usually take notes during the event?

A Yeah. Had an agent's notebook about this wide and about this long, with a spiral up at the top.

Q That's about three and a half inches wide.

A Yeah.

Q Eight inches on the side.

A Yeah. And you'd take notes and -- Of course, if you -- if it was a signed statement or something, then, you'd get the person to read and initial your signed statement and everything.

Then your -- When you got ready to dictate on it, your normal procedure -- back when I was in the Bureau -- was, you didn't go over five days before you dictated your notes.

And you'd dictate your notes. They would go into the steno pool. And the steno pool would type it up -- the steno or stenographer.

And they'd come back to you. And you, of course, had -- still had your notes. You'd read it and compare it with your notes. And if there was something wrong, you made corrections; it went back for -- In this day, of course, a lot of this stuff was stencil. Back there, you know, where they changed the stencil.

And then after that was done -- you were sure that your notes jived with what was in your 302, you tore up your

notes. And then if you went in to testify on that case later on, you didn't take this FD -- Your original FD 302 became a part of the permanent file.

I initialed that. O'Neill -- That 302 has a JWS and an FXO on it. And that's part of the file.

And then your copies are made, distributed to other auxiliary offices and that. But the --

Lost my chain of thought there. So -- Oh, in the -- in the trial.

If I had a bank robbery case -- Let's say, I had interviewed Robert over here, and he was a bank robbery suspect in the thing. And I talked to him, made notes and everything.

When it comes to trial and if he didn't elect to testify, I'd go on the stand as to what he told me. And it was based on the FD 302. Now, I didn't take the 302 with me, but I went over it to get ready for trial -- went over it and knew everything that was in it. And I would testify just what was in that 302.

And if I missed some salient point, the United States

Attorney would say, "Well, Agent Sibert, did you ask Robert about this?"

And that would refresh my memory. And I'd say, "Oh, yes." And then I'd go ahead and cover something that I'd missed out of recollection of the 302. So, that's basically the way it worked.

Q Was there anything in the preparation of this particular 302 that deviated from the standard procedure that you've just described?

A Not at all.

Q When you initialed the original of the 302, did you ever initial more than one document, or one version of it?

A You mean more than one copy, or --

Q More than one copy, yes.

A Of the same --

Q Of the same version.

A In other words, you mean duplicate copies.

Q Yes. Did you initial --

A No. If it was -- if it was on the stencil or they run it off on the copy machine, of course, your initials would

cam

137

show up on that. But you only initial the original.

Q Okay. Just a moment ago, you made reference to notes that you took during the autopsy; is that right?

A Yeah.

Q You did take notes during the autopsy.

A Mm-hmm.

Q I'd like to show you a document that -- I'd like to ask you just to focus on one particular issue in it, and talk about other issues later, which is Exhibit 154.

Which I'll state, on its face, appears to be a memorandum from Arlen Specter, Warren Commission staff, to J. Lee Rankin, who was the general counsel for the Warren Commission, dated March 12th, 1964.

And in this memorandum, it says, "Special Agent Sibert advised that he made no notes during the autopsy."

Is that correct?

A That is absolutely false. I mean, I never -- There would be no way in the world I'd make a statement that I made no notes during the autopsy.

Q Okay. I'd now like to show you a document --

A Did he say anything about -- I didn't read that. Did he say neither one of us made notes, or -- He said I didn't. But what did he say about O'Neill?

Q He said -- It says, "Special Agent O'Neill stated that he made only a few notes, which he destroyed after his report was dictated."

A Yeah. No.

Q Do you recall now whether it was you or Special Agent O'Neill who actually dictated the Exhibit No. 151?

A We both dictated it. This was a joint -- That's the reason -- the two here. In other words, otherwise, it would have been separate FD 302s if --

And what I said to Frank -- That was another thing, going back. I said, "Frank," I said, "we want to make sure that we get the names of everybody that comes into this autopsy room, as close as we can come to it."

And there's some misspellings there. Like Halloway, I think, was Galloway. And Burkley was -- I had it B-e-r-k, and it's B-u-r-k-l-e-y. But we wanted to know that.

And I think it was valuable that we did get it, because

I'm not aware that Secret Service had a separate list of people there, other than their medical personnel.

Q Did you ask for people's names? Did you pass a list around?

A No. I asked people's name or maybe someone that knew them -- I mean, another officer there. I'd say, "And this gentleman's name?" here on this, and get the name that way.

But that's the reason -- the misspelling. I mean, we didn't pass a list, but it was personal collection of these names.

Q I'd like to show you now an original -- what we understand to be the original of MD 151, so we've been looking at a copy. And this now appears to us to be original. I'll state for the record that this is Record No. 124-10063-10184.

Can you identify whether this is, in fact, the original?

A Yeah. I see the ink there. That's --

Q Can you identify your initials?

A JWS, yeah. It doesn't look like it, but that's what it is.

Q Is that in pencil?

A No, I think that was in ink.

[Examining document.] That looks like pencil; doesn't it. I don't recall ever initialing anything -- But that's certainly my initials.

Q Earlier when you were describing the process of making 302s, you referred to it either being typed up or putting on a stencil.

By looking at this document, which you've just identified as the original, can you tell whether this is -- was made pursuant to a stencil or whether it is a typed original?

A I can't tell. But I would assume that -- See, you had -- Dallas was office of origin in this thing. In other words, many investigation -- wouldn't offices -- office of origin. The others are auxiliary. And Dallas was -- And they were getting copies, and then --

I'm pretty sure that probably was put on stencil.

Q Let me show you part of the -- what I understand to be the airtel cover sheet for, still, Exhibit 151. Though, we are looking at the original right now.

There is a reference being made to --

A Twenty-five copies, yeah.

Q -- copies.

A Yeah, yeah.

Q And 25 copies of each investigative insert.

A Yeah.

Q Does that help --

A That --

Q -- clarify whether this is a stencil or --

A That -- that almost had to be a stencil, because they wouldn't type that many, I mean.

And as I recall, the dictating machines came in -- I don't know what years they came in. But the latter part of my -- I used to go into Baltimore, and you'd run stuff on the dictating machines taking the place of the old stencil, you know.

Q Now, just because we are now living in an age where people may be unfamiliar with what stencils are, could you describe, just very briefly, what a stencil is as opposed to typing?

A Yeah. Well, it's a -- it was a -- On carbon papers, you know. Carbon copies there. And when the type -- when the person typing it, they cut it on stencil. In other words, as it typed the letter, it cut through the top page there. So that when it went through the mimeograph machine and everything, it showed through on the --

Q Is this -- The kind of stencil that I'm familiar with is a --

A And it's a long, blue --

Q -- a larger sheet of paper. It has a plastic --

A Blue. The top was blue there, you know, that you cut through.

Q And the part that was cut through was plastic --

A Yeah.

Q -- so the ink would come through. Meaning that, at the end, the original object that this is done -- is a piece of inky plastic.

A Yeah. Right, right.

Q And, so, do you know what's done usually with the inky plastic thing when it's finished?

A Throw it away, yeah.

Q Wouldn't make much sense to keep it. So, the closest that we would have is --

A Yeah, yeah.

Q -- this one that is in your hand today?

A Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about this. On page one of the 302, there is -- On the third line down, there's a statement:

"Air Force" -- then "One" appears to be dropped below the bottom of the line, and then it goes back up, "the President's jet".

Do you have any idea what that signifies?

A I -- I don't know what that would be, unless it was a typographical error or something that was sent back for a correction.

Because as they explained that to me -- the colonel out there at the -- and other people, but that Air Force One is always the -- If you had One and Two -- the big jets -- flying, Air Force One is what the President is in.

Air Force Two is subordinate individuals.

And you could have -- As I understood it, you could have Air Force One going out with the President on it, but if he stayed out there and somebody else came back with that, it wouldn't be Air Force One then.

I guess, that was for coding, because in your aeronautical things, everybody -- Air Force One, they knew that was the President -- flight -- flight plans and all that stuff for security reasons.

Q Would you look at page three now? It will be a similar sort of question. There's a --

A Yeah.

Q -- a gap halfway down --

A A lot of this time -- This happened a lot with stencils. In other words, if there was a correction made, they'd just put that fluid on there, you know, and retype it again on the stencil, rather than having to type the whole stencil sheet again.

"Arrangements were made - for the performance of the autopsy by the U.S. Navy and Secret Service."

Well, now, that -- evidently, the way I had it in my notes. And maybe there was something in that stencil when it was typed up that didn't jive with that, and I -- we changed it.

Q Could you turn to page four? This again will be a similar question. On the first very line, "during the autopsy" -- then there's a space -- "inspection". Do you have any idea of what came in that space?

A No, I don't. But the only ones that would have changed this is the dictating agents. In other words, if -- This is joint. If O'Neill -- there was something there that wasn't jive with his notes, or didn't jive with my notes, or we knew -- you'd send it back to the steno, and the correction would be made before it was run, so -- It wouldn't have been any other time after that.

Q If we can go back to the first page again, where there was the reference to Air Force One.

A Here.

Q Do you recall whether there was anything more specific or different from "Air Force One", such as the number 6970?

Would that make any sense?

A That's the aircraft identification number.

Q Yeah. Could that be? Or just no idea?

A Again, I could be wrong. But my understanding was on -- that Air Force One could be -- They had two big jets, either one of them could be Air Force One --

Q Sure. No, I understand.

A -- according to whether the President was aboard or not.

Q Now, in your original 302, there is reference made to your interviews with Misters Kellerman and Greer at the time of the autopsy. Then a few days later, you interviewed them again --

A Yeah.

Q -- as you had mentioned before. Can you tell me what the purpose was for your going back to interview these same people again?

A All I can recall on that is that we were instructed to do that. Now, whether that -- It had to emanate from the Bureau, from headquarters -- got a hold of Baltimore, but --

And I don't remember -- I think Baltimore called -- And I'm sure Baltimore would have called us, rather than -- And they probably said, "Look, the Bureau wants these --" Because there was no real formal interviews that night.

Like for -- To give you an idea of what went on, I was with Bill Greer quite a bit. And he kept saying, "If I'd only been moving faster," you know.

He said, "But I'd try to speed it up." And he said, "The President, he'd say, 'Slow down. You're going too fast.'" And he said --

You do that type stuff, see. And, so, that wasn't a formal interview. But when we went back over, this was a regular -- formal interviews to talk with them and get a little more detailed information on that.

Q Now, certainly, one of the differences between the two interviews -- as I'm sure you're aware -- is, in the first interview, Mr. Kellerman refers to President Kennedy saying something after he was shot the first time. In the second interview, there's no mention of that.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q I am corrected. What the utterance was changed between the first and the second time.

A See, I didn't recall the --

Q I apologize for that.

A That's all right.

Q That mistake. I'm getting old, I guess.

A No. I got news for you.

Q Did anyone ask you to try to determine whether Kellerman was certain about having heard something during the first -- that you reported in your first description, as to asking --

A You know, I --

Q -- asking Kellerman, "Did you really hear the President say something?"

A You know, do you have a copy of that FD 302? Because I never saw it.

Q Yes.

A I mean, a copy. I mean, we dictated it.

Q You now have Exhibit No. 152.

[Discussion off the record.]

THE WITNESS: Kellerman and Greer are both deceased.

Q That's correct. If you turn to page three, I can show you where the portion is.

A Right.

Q Do you remember there being any discussion at all at the Bureau about trying to determine whether Kellerman, in fact, heard the President say something after he'd been shot?

A None other than this one interview here. I don't know of anything.

Q So, you don't know of anyone having made an issue about this?

A You mean, in the Bureau?

Q In the Bureau saying, "Go back and ask Kellerman again" or discussion --

A No, I don't recall anything like that.

Q Okay.

A In fact, all the calls I received from guys sitting on the desk over there at headquarters, I would have remembered

cam

150

if anyone would have said, "Now, are you sure Kellerman said this?" Nothing like that ever happened.

Q Okay.

MR. GUNN: Could we take just a short break?

THE WITNESS: Sure.

[Recess.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q Mr. Sibert, one of the people whom we've been discussing was Gerald Behn, whom you went back to interview; is that correct?

A Yeah.

Q Do you have any understanding as to why he was selected as someone to interview, what the purpose for that was?

A I think he -- Wasn't he the -- in charge of the White House detail? And Kellerman was his assistant, I mean, or his -- And he was on that --

But I don't know why they had us interview Behn, because we -- unless he wanted us to -- wanted to be interview, too. I mean, wanted to throw more light on it. I mean --

Q Okay.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. GUNN:

Q In the 302 regarding Mr. Behn, there's a discussion about Air Force One and Air Force Two, and the procedures for that.

Were you asked to ask Mr. Behn about that, or do you know why that was an issue that was continued there?

A I don't recall that being particularly pointed out -- about questioning Behn about that. Maybe Behn just volunteered this. I don't know whether a question was even asked in that respect.

I think he did -- just said, "Well, you know --" on this flight, about Johnson going out ahead and getting things set up and -- for the welcoming party and all that type of thing, you know. But I don't recall. I think that was just volunteered by Behn.

Q Okay. I'd now like to go to the interview. Mr. Sibert, I'd like to show you the 302, Exhibit No. 151, one more time. And show you the people whom you've identified.

A Yeah.

Q There is an Admiral Burkley, who --

A And that's misspelled.

Q And that's misspelled. Later in the document, you refer to a Dr. George Bakeman, U.S. Navy. Do you know who that is, or any recollection?

A Let's see. No, I don't.

Q Now, the person who is the President's personal physician was Admiral --

A Admiral -- Admiral Burkley.

Q Right. Who is also --

A Navy.

Q His first name was George, and he was a doctor. And I'm wondering whether the Bakeman would be a confusion with the Burkley there, or whether there was yet another person?

A Not that I know.

Q Again, Admiral Dr. George Burkley --

A Doctor.

Q -- was U.S. Navy.

A Yeah, and doctor. I mean, you'd think it was put -- they'd put -- I mean, Burkley would be admiral or --

Q Sure.

A -- his personal physician.

Q Do you recall now whether Admiral Burkley was wearing a uniform?

A Well, there was so many uniforms there that night.

Q Yes. One thing I'm wondering is if -- whether part of this may have been something that you dictated, and Mr. O'Neill dictated another part, and that --

A Yeah.

Q -- there was a confusion in that way.

A That could be, but I doubt it. Bakeman and Burkley, that's not that close, you know. And --

Q Do you have any other explanation of who a Navy --

A I don't know who that would be.

Q Okay.

A Does that name come up anywhere else?

Q No.

Now I'd like to go back to an issue that we've discussed previously, and that was your interview with Arlen Specter.

A Yeah.

Q Could you tell me about how that interview came about and what happened in it?

A Here again, I think -- probably emanated from the Bureau, and they called Baltimore. And in my notes on that thing -- that was '64 -- I put in there, "Testify Warren Commission - at Bureau later on." But we --

And I can't remember whether it whether it was a restaurant, but they -- the two -- O'Neill and I. Baltimore told us that we were to be interviewed over there in connection with the Warren Commission. That's why I put that.

And, so, we got instructions to meet him at a certain place here in Washington. It wasn't in the Bureau, or it wasn't over in the office -- the other office -- government office building that I can recall.

Q Do you recall if it was out by the Capitol Building?

A I -- There again, I've tried to think. And I -- Just downtown Washington. It wasn't a formal place at all, as I can recall.

And he talked to us, and asked us some questions,

which shows there that -- And then we went back and stopped off at Rosen's office over there, investigative division, and told him to the best of recollection what he had asked us and everything, so they could prepare a memo.

And that's the way it came about. I mean --

Q What did --

A -- he didn't call over to Hyattsville that he wanted to see us. I don't think that happened. I mean, it went through all -- it went through channels, you know, through the Bureau.

Q From the questions that he was asking, did you have any -- or did you have any understanding of why it was that he was talking to you, or what information he was attempting to elicit?

A Well, afterwards, I've had doubts and wondered. Of course, he went back and -- I think, and, of course, presented to the Warren Commission what we had said.

Q The way that the autopsy protocol reads and the conclusions that it reaches, certainly, seem different from some of the things that are in your report --

A Well, there were --

Q -- that was taken sometime --

A There were -- As I said, what it boils down to, you had two autopsy reports. I mean, the one that's in the Archives on the 22nd of -- O'Neill, what happened there. And then you had the other one, the official autopsy report.

And you had what O'Neill and I had said repeated in those summary things that were sent to Dallas, you know, out of Baltimore, the -- oh, the agent assigned to the case there, liaison agent. But then the stuff from -- on this other was different.

And that's what -- Lifton called me. He said, "Hey, wait a minute." He said, "We've got --" He had the other autopsy report, which I've never seen. And he said, "What's -- what's going on here?" He said --

And I said, "Well," I said, when he -- I asked him about this initials and everything. I said, "You've got the 302 in front of you." And he asked me a couple other questions.

I said, "And we'll just have to let the record stand."

Because I didn't know what had happened or what -- See, when any -- when this other was developed, we

never received any information on that.

Let me say this, too. We didn't dictate this thing until Tuesday, the 26th, I think was the -- Now, let's say, over at Bethesda, they went -- they called Parkland on the 23rd, Saturday morning.

Now, if they would have called the Bureau, who would have gotten in touch with O'Neill and I in Baltimore, and said, "Hey, wait a minute," you know. "We called Parkland. We found out, where this tracheotomy was made was where a bullet -- That's a bullet wound. And we've got some changes in the autopsy report."

We would have held up, probably, dictating our FD 302. We wouldn't have torn it up. It would have gone in original interview, but their official -- if we'd had to go back and re-interview him again. But we had no word at all of this going on.

So, I come back, and I say I -- And now it was hindsight. But I can kind of see why maybe that it was inadvisable to bring us before the Warren Commission.

Q What is the first time that you understood a possible

discrepancy between the Warren Commission and your own reports or -- Let me withdraw that and try it again.

The first time you understood a possible discrepancy between the official autopsy report and your own reports is when it was told to you by David Lifton?

A On that call to Georgia, on November the 2nd, 1966.

Q And, so, therefore, I assume that it's fair to say that no one at the FBI ever said anything to you --

A No.

Q -- about this prior to that time.

A No.

Q Is it surprising to you that someone at the FBI didn't say something to you in December or January of 1963 (sic) when the FBI got a copy of the autopsy report?

A Well, it -- Now, I'm not saying -- It wasn't sent to us. Now, maybe they called in to Tully, my boss, in Baltimore and said, "Well, you know, over here at the Bureau, we've got an entirely different thing from the Commission on this autopsy report. And it sure is a discrepancy in Sibert and O'Neill's."

But that wasn't -- But, boy, I -- When I come back,

as I say, you used to get those calls, "Did you -- Is this your saying here about tracheotomy and head surgery?"

"No, it's -- I'm not a doctor."

So, they were, evidently, getting inquiries or getting other stuff -- flack in there, you know, some way -- or conflicting stuff. But they never mentioned -- They never come out like this and said, "Well, your account sure is in contradiction. It doesn't jive with the other."

Q Let me tell you two or three things that we have learned. And although I don't testify about things, just try and put it into a context.

I'd like your best assessment of any information that you can give, and prefer -- you're not to speculate, but also best reasonable judgment that you can make.

It appears, to us, fairly clear that the FBI consistently agreed with your version of the autopsy.

A Yeah.

Q But subsequent FBI documents --

A Yeah.

Q -- stayed with that. And the FBI never questioned

cam

160

it.

A Right, yeah.

Q We also know that Dr. Humes wrote notes during the autopsy, which he subsequently destroyed.

A Right.

Q He --

A Burned in his fireplace.

Q He also wrote a draft autopsy report, which he subsequently destroyed.

A I didn't know that.

Q He's testified to that under oath now. So, we have a peculiar situation --

A Yeah.

Q -- here, where an autopsy is being rewritten later; and that there are, indeed, two versions. What is not clear -- I mean, those all seem to me to be facts, as far as I understand.

A Yeah.

Q What is not clear is why the FBI did not do something more with this?

A There again, I can't say why on that. But no one ever sit down with me -- I never had a conference with anybody saying, "Well, look, here's -- What -- How do you account for this?"

And my answer would have probably been the same as I gave to Lifton. "Let's let the record stand."

Q Yeah. Okay. All right.

A Well, I thought I had one more on my side, when I read this in the Fort Myer's paper down there.

Q Yes. And you're referring to a newspaper clipping, dated July 3rd, 1997, headline: "Ford Altered JFK Report on Bullet".

What was your reaction when you heard about this issue?

A You mean, about him --

Q About Ford's editing of the report.

A Well, I -- I felt like, "Thank goodness that --" Because I couldn't account for how that wound in the back had been moved up gradually -- up to the base of the neck from down below the scapula.

Q So, now, based upon what you know from what you observed at the autopsy, do you have any assessment on what happened on November 22nd in Dealey Plaza?

A No. I -- I -- I -- Let me say this. And I've said this before. That I won't say there was a conspiracy, but I have always had trouble assimilating the single-bullet theory. Seeing where that wound was, a eyewitness there -- 12 inches from it, seeing them probe that.

And from what I understand in reading, the bullet wounds in the coat in the back match the first location that Humes gave us. And, of course, they tried to say that if he raised his arm up --

But if you raise your arm up, you're not going to raise your shirt. It's pinned in there with your belt. Plus the fact that the President wore a back brace, I understand, that was pretty tight, too, which would hold down the shirt.

And, so, I've always had trouble with that. And when you talk with --

I told Hosty that's down there -- I think he's been before you, from Dallas -- I said, "Jim, I can't buy the

single-bullet theory." And he said, well, he didn't have any problem with it. But he wasn't as close to that wound as I was.

Q Let me try one last question, and ask you whether there's anything I should have asked you, but didn't, that you would like to answer?

A Let me just -- There's one thing I -- I've got a pad here somewhere. Here it is.

Well, one of the things I want to point out, of course, is that we had no jurisdiction. I think I mentioned that. That came along in '65.

Q You mean, the federal government had no jurisdiction over the assassination?

A Yeah. In other words, there was no book statutory giving any investigative agency -- any government agency jurisdiction over an attempted assassination or the assassination of a President.

Secret Service had protection, and -- But nothing covered. And it seems unreasonable -- you think of all the assassinations we've had -- why that didn't. So, you weren't

in a position where --

If that happened now, one of the first things I would have asked Dr. Humes -- and I wouldn't have been out of bounds -- I would say, "Well, Dr. Humes, have you called Parkland, and see what transpired or what was the condition?"

But I -- I was in no position to do that -- a little, lowly senior resident agent in Hyattsville. If I would have -- All it would take is some high-ranking officer saying that, "You've got an agent over here trying to run the autopsy."

Which I understand Humes and Boswell have never been critical about any interference on the part of any of the Secret Service, either. But -- So, we were at -- Our hands were tied, I mean, on that. I mean --

But, as I've cited that other autopsy -- how it started, and then comparing the two, the difference in them.

And let's see. I have a biographical sketch about my own -- what I've done. But, now, we can talk about off the record.

Missile wounds. We've covered that.

And I've covered that the -- what I consider the

cam

165

reasons for the two autopsies was that phone call on Saturday morning.

MR. HORNE: The two reports?

THE WITNESS: Beg your pardon?

BY MR. GUNN:

Q When you say the two autopsies, you mean the official autopsy protocol --

A Well, I mean --

Q -- and your version?

A Yeah, our version and the Navy version.

Q Right.

A Yeah, I think that's -- We've covered it pretty well, I think.

But on the body bags, I was telling Mr. Horne here that -- and I think I mentioned to you -- that I was base operations officer and dealing with that. So, Lifton -- he always said, "Well, you sure of body bags?"

I said, "Look, Dave." I said, "I -- Take it from me, I know what body bags are."

Climbing to the top of those mountains up to crash

cam

166

scenes, and seeing the medics up there. The ambulance could so far, and they'd have to hand-carry them down in body bags.

And so --

MR. GUNN: Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

THE WITNESS: I hope I've been helpful.

MR. GUNN: Yes, thank you.

[Whereupon, at 5:10 p.m., the taking of the deposition concluded.]

[Signature not waived.]

- - -

cam

167

CERTIFICATE OF DEPONENT

I have read the foregoing pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

James W. Sibert

-- -- --

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 1997.

Notary Public in and for

cam

169

My commission expires