

MEMORANDUM

June 12, 1996

To: The File
cc - David Marwell, Jeremy Gunn

From: Joe Freeman

Subject: Comments on/corrections to brief, unsolicited extract from an unpublished manuscript, re: Item 9, Autopsy materials

1) p. 516, paragraph 2: "There it remained for the next two and one-half years."

The length of time between the transfer of the autopsy materials to the EOB and their subsequent transfer to Evelyn Lincoln's office at the National Archives building was roughly **one** and one-half years, not two.

2) p. 517, paragraph 1 (carried over from previous page): "Mrs. [Angie] Novello was out of town when the HSCA later attempted to interview her. Her attorney told the Committee that she knew nothing. In 1994, Mrs. Novello stated in a phone interview with the author that she was never questioned by the Committee."

Angie Novello was interviewed by HSCA staffers Jim Kelly and Andy Purdy on 8/23/77 at her Civil Defense office at the Pentagon. Kelly and Purdy authored an 8/29/77 summary of this interview (HSCA Record 180-10105-10167). In addition, on 10/31/78 her attorney, Herbert J. Miller, forwarded to the HSCA an affidavit (dated the previous day) from Novello. In his cover letter, Miller states that the 8/29/77 interview summary (which he and Novello must have seen and reviewed) "does not accurately reflect the conversation or the facts."

3) p. 517, same paragraph: "After Bobby's assassination in 1968, Lincoln began to wonder what happened to the brain. She called Ted Kennedy who assured her that everything was under control."

According to Andy Purdy's 7/7/78 summary of his 7/5/78 interview with Evelyn Lincoln (HSCA Record 180-10077-10138), Lincoln stated that she called Kenny O'Donnell who in turn called Senator Ted Kennedy. It was Kenny O'Donnell, not Senator Kennedy, who told Lincoln that "everything was under control."

4) p. 517, same paragraph: 'According to Dr. Burkley, "Giordano moved the material to the JFK

Library in Boston and knows something about the brain”.’

The document being quoted is HSCA record 180-10105-10196, a 9/1/77 interview summary of an interview with Dr. George Burkley, conducted the same day by Andy Purdy and Jim Kelly. This record was only recently brought to our attention. The relevant statement of Dr. Burkley, *as quoted in the interview summary*, is: “Giordano moved material to the JFK Library in the Boston area and knows something about the brain.” The addition of “the” before “material” in the rendition of the quote on p. 517 suggests that Burkley is referring to the autopsy material, whereas -- as it actually reads in the HSCA document -- it is possible Burkley is simply referring in a general way to Giordano’s responsibilities for moving various items (which may or may not have included autopsy material) in support of archival efforts related to what eventually became the JFK Library. In this interview summary, Burkley also relates how he set up a lunch with Mrs. Lincoln at a Holiday Inn in hopes of doing some “sleuthing” to find out whatever she might know concerning the whereabouts of the brain. Burkley relates how, in the end, he never asked her about the brain at the lunch. In a related but differing account, Evelyn Lincoln recounts (in HSCA Record 180-10077-10138, previously cited) how, in 1972, she had dinner with Burkley at Duke Ziebert’s, during which they discussed the autopsy materials.

5) p. 518 first paragraph (continued from previous page): “Deputy Archivist Trudy Peterson witnessed the material being brought back into the building, suggesting that Bobby, Novello, et al, removed it from the building in May of 1965 to a location designated by Kennedy.”

Trudy Peterson was not present at this event. In fact, according to Peterson herself (HSCA Record 180-10087-10452), “Bahmer [then Archivist of the United States] believes that Kahn [Herman Kahn, then Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries and NARA liaison with the Kennedy family] supervised the acceptance of the footlocker... Kahn may have been the only Archives staff present, and he is dead.” Peterson is writing, to the HSCA, in September of 1977. She adds: “We have found no record of the delivery.” While it can be inferred from Peterson’s memo that she and other Archives personnel assume that all the autopsy materials left the National Archives building in 1965 when Novello picked them up from Evelyn Lincoln’s office, and were then returned under Kahn’s supervision in 1966, there is no record of or witness to the removal of the material from the Archives building in 1965 (as opposed to Evelyn Lincoln’s office). While the “missing” autopsy materials were self-evidently removed at some point, it is at least possible that Novello and Kahn simply moved the material from Lincoln’s office to RFK’s courtesy storage vault (Vault 6-W-3) on that day in 1965 (that is, it may be that some of the autopsy material never left the building, per se, and that the “missing” material was removed subsequently from Vault 6-W-3). Lincoln herself seems to support this view in her 7/5/78 interview: Purdy, in his summary, cites Lincoln as stating that “they [RFK and Novello] apparently wanted the materials moved to another part of the Archives, presumably to some location where Robert Kennedy was storing other materials.” On balance, it seems likely that all the materials *were* removed from the Archives building on the day Novello came to Lincoln’s office -- the point is simply that the record does not provide conclusive proof of this assumption and that another

possibility exists.

6) p. 518, third paragraph, Mankiewicz allegation: 3/22/78 OCR by Blakey referencing issues discussed at a dinner with Mankiewicz -- "2. Thinks President's brain is in grave. LBJ, Ted, Bobby and maybe McNamara buried it when body transferred. Ted 'seemed' to confirm it later."

This document (HSCA Record 180-10089-10476), newly brought to our attention, raises several questions. First, LBJ was not present at the reinterment on the evening of 3/14/67. He *was* present the next morning for the 7:00 AM service (the new grave having long since been filled in and various aesthetic/landscaping tasks completed). More importantly, it seems apparent that Blakey assigned HSCA staffer Andy Purdy to follow up on this revelation. The very next day (3/23/78), Purdy places a call to Mankiewicz ("re: missing autopsy materials") who is out of town (HSCA Record 180-10075-10405). On 4/12/78 Purdy calls Mankiewicz again and they finally connect on 4/13/78. Purdy's OCR of this call does not appear to reflect the same information which Mankiewicz proffered to Blakey: "[Mankiewicz] Can practically swear nothing put in grave besides casket." Moreover, in HSCA Volume 6, the Committee concluded that the brain was *not* buried with the President's body at the reinterment. Also cited on p. 518 is the claim that HSCA "Chief Investigator" Robert Tanenbaum (his actual title was Deputy Chief Counsel) told the author that in 1978 Mankiewicz told Tanenbaum of a RFK/Mankiewicz phone call in which RFK indicated the brain was going to be put "back in the coffin." Since Tanenbaum left the HSCA in August of 1977, he was a former staffer by the time his contact with Mankiewicz took place and consequently there is no HSCA record of it. While the stated intention to put the brain "in the coffin" would be consistent with the observation of Mankiewicz and others present at the reinterment that nothing else *besides* the vault was put into the new grave, it raises the even larger difficulty of how the President's vault could have been unsealed and the brain placed in the coffin between 7:44 PM when the military log of the reinterment records "2/3 of earth around President Kennedy's vault removed" and 8:10 PM when the "crane hook [was] attached to President's vault" for the 8:16 PM lifting of the vault out of the old grave, the 8:20 PM lowering of the vault into the new grave and the 8:34 PM covering of the President's new grave with earth. Various people interviewed by the HSCA maintain this did not and could not have happened. Lastly, in a footnote on p. 518, there are additional statements to the effect that Blakey was informed by a NARA employee after the HSCA had closed up shop that the he/she "knew" the brain was in the ground at Arlington. While this employee subsequently denied this to the author of p. 518, the author does not take the disavowal at face value. It is clear that both Blakey and the author of p. 518 can identify this employee.