

MEMORANDUM

To: File

From: Jeremy Gunn

Date: December 19, 1995

Subject:

On Sunday, December 18, 1995, I interviewed Dr. Charles Crenshaw at his home in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Crenshaw was one of the attending physicians to President Kennedy at Parkland Memorial Hospital on November 22, 1963. Dr. Crenshaw has stated his observations regarding the injuries to President Kennedy on several occasions. His recounting of the injuries, and the condition of the wounds, was similar in my interview with him.

I showed Dr. Crenshaw the Fox photographs of President Kennedy. Dr. Crenshaw made the following observations:

- a) In the photograph, known as the "stare of death," Dr. Crenshaw observed, as he has stated several times previously, that the wound on the throat is greatly enlarged over that which he had previously seen. I queried whether the wound might have increased in size simply due to handling of the body. Dr. Crenshaw did not know, of course, but doubted that would provide the explanation. Dr. Crenshaw noted, with the exception of the throat wound, that the condition of the body appeared very similar to that as he observed it in Dallas. The two differences that he noticed, other than the throat wound, were the blood that appeared to be in the ear and, second, the fact that the eyes were open. He was certain that the ears were cleaned in Parkland and that the eyes were closed. With these exceptions, however, he noticed no difference. For the picture that shows the top of President Kennedy's head, which is identifiable as Clark photograph No. 16, Dr. Crenshaw said that he "did not recognize the picture." He observed that the condition shown in the photograph was unlike anything that he had seen in Parkland. The photograph of President Kennedy's back and back of head, Clark exhibit No. 9, Dr. Crenshaw said that he never observed President Kennedy's back. He said, however, that the condition of the head is entirely different from what he observed in Parkland. He noted that there was the wound the size of a fist in the back right of President Kennedy's head. Such a wound does not appear at all in the photograph.

The photograph showing the back of President Kennedy's head, Clark exhibit No. 7, with the flap apparently above the right ear and with gloves holding the scalp or hair, Dr. Crenshaw stated that the wound that he saw in Parkland does not appear in the photograph. For the

photograph that shows President Kennedy in his left profile, Dr. Crenshaw said that the photograph appeared very similar to President Kennedy as he had seen him. He noted that the right profile, photograph which we have not seen and do not know if it exists, would have looked very similar. Dr. Crenshaw noted that the wound, which he located at the back of President Kennedy's head, could not be seen from the right side. Thus, the photograph that shows only the left profile resembles the right profile as well.

Dr. Crenshaw was unable to identify or situate the photograph that shows the interior of the skull. He was not able to determine whether the photograph shows the back of the skull or the front of the skull. When I asked him whether the part of the skull that is shown in the center of the photograph could be the parietal bone, Dr. Crenshaw doubted that it could because of the bumps on the bone.

In summation, Dr. Crenshaw asserted that the wounds that he observed in Dallas are not demonstrable on the photographs as they now appear.

Dr. Crenshaw made the following additional observations: First, after President Kennedy's death, gauze was placed over the wound in the back of the head to stop the bleeding. The gauze was in the shape of "flats." These he characterized as square gauze pads. On top of the gauze, the O'Neal Funeral Home placed a "rubberized sack" over the top of the wound to prevent blood from falling onto the satin lining of the coffin. Over the rubberized sack, a clear plastic mattress cover sheet was placed. On top of the clear plastic sheet, the hospital wrapped a Parkland Hospital sheet. Thus the President's brain was packed in gauze, a rubberized sack, a clear plastic sheet, and a cotton sheet. Dr. Crenshaw observed that the wound was still bleeding profusely at the time that it was packed in the coffin.

Dr. Crenshaw made the following comments based upon what he himself characterized as "hearsay." Dr. Crenshaw said that he had heard that nurse Audrey Bell, who was the supervisor of the operating room at Parkland, said that she heard from Dr. Perry that he had been called several times on the night of November 22 and had been threatened that he was going to be ruined if he stated what he saw in Dallas. Dr. Crenshaw emphasized that this was only hearsay and he suggested that we speak to nurse Bell.

Dr. Crenshaw also stated that he had heard that President Johnson called on the evening of November 22 to Parkland Hospital to ask how his "boy," by whom he meant Governor Connally, was doing.

Dr. Crenshaw recalled that Dr. Perry had said that Dr. Humes called on Saturday morning and that Dr. Perry and Humes discussed the tracheostomy incision.

Dr. Crenshaw stated that some government agents, he wasn't certain whether they were Secret Service or FBI, came into the emergency room after President Kennedy died and asked for, and were given, some small skull fragments. They took a few of these small fragments with them. Dr. Crenshaw characterized these fragments as smaller than the size of a thumbnail. He said that the agents also took President Kennedy's clothes.

I asked Dr. Crenshaw about when he had first determined that he believed there was a discrepancy between the autopsy photographs and the wounds that he observed in Dallas in 1963. He said that he first saw reproductions of the autopsy photographs in 1991. It was at that time that he came to believe that there was a substantial discrepancy between evidence related to the autopsy in Dallas and his own observations at Parkland Hospital. It was observing these photographs that prompted him to write his book, A Conspiracy of Silence. Dr. Crenshaw does not know how to account for the discrepancies in appearance between the photographs and his observations. He is quite certain, however, that what is shown in the photographs do not reflect what he saw in Dallas.

I asked Dr. Crenshaw how he accounted for the statements of other Dallas doctors. He stated, with some firmness, that the Dallas doctors originally had described the wound in much the same way that he had. All of the doctors, according to Dr. Crenshaw, identified a wound in the back right-hand side of President Kennedy's head, that overlapped the occipital and parietal regions of the brain. He also noted that several of the Dallas doctors had identified cerebellum as extruding from the wound. I asked him why some of the doctors changed their minds, apparently in 1992. Dr. Crenshaw stated that he was unable to understand why the doctors had changed their minds. He said that he himself had never been approached by any agents of the federal government with the request that he change his testimony. He does believe that some of the Dallas doctors changed their testimony due to pressure that was put on them with relationship to the JAMA articles. He observed that he was very disappointed that these doctors had changed their minds, and he ultimately was unable to explain what would have possessed them to change their minds.

I asked Dr. Crenshaw with whom I should speak regarding observations of the Dallas doctors. He gave me the following list: Dr. Kemp Clark, Dr. Robert McClelland, Dr. Ronald Jones, nurse Audrey Bell, nurse Margaret Hinchliffe, Dr. Flouard Bashour, and Dr. Robert Grossman. He observed in passing that all of these doctors looked up to and admired Dr. Shires. I told Dr. Crenshaw that Dr. McClelland had declined to speak to me. He said that he would call Dr. McClelland tomorrow (Monday) and suggest that Dr. McClelland speak to me. He said that Dr. McClelland is an extremely honest man who feels much beleaguered by the Kennedy assassination issue. He observed that with respect to the NOVA television program on the Kennedy assassination, Dr. McClelland says that the tape was edited and did not reflect his actual opinion. This point should be verified with Dr. McClelland. Dr.

Crenshaw stated that he was unable to explain why the doctors, in his opinion, changed their position in the NOVA broadcast.

I asked Dr. Crenshaw which of the Dallas doctors he believed might retain notes from the time of the assassination. He believed that Dr. Ronald Jones kept a meticulous diary. He also had a recollection that Dr. Carrico may have written something about the assassination in a letter to be read by his children. Dr. Crenshaw stated that he was unaware of any doctors perhaps having contemporaneous notes or records of their treatment of President Kennedy.

Dr. Crenshaw seemed very pleased that I had spoken to him and was very interested in the work of the Board continuing and leading to the disclosure of all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. He offered to think about what possible approaches might be made in order to clarify the record. He stated that he would contact me if he had any further insights. He also stated that we should not hesitate to contact him further.