

May 29, 1996

Mr. Jerrol F. Custer
9920 Saltsburg Road
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15239

Dear Mr. Custer:

I am writing you as a follow-up to my letter of March 5, 1996, which forwarded you explanatory information about the scope of the JFK Act, and an explanation of the Review Board's mandate and its powers.

I am aware that on April 17, 1996, Mr. Douglas Horne, a Senior Analyst on my staff who is well acquainted with the medical evidence documenting the autopsy of President John F. Kennedy, called your home to make initial voice contact with you and to attempt to set up a date for a telephonic interview. Apparently, you made very clear during this brief conversation that you had no desire to discuss the autopsy of President Kennedy with anyone anymore, and chose to abruptly terminate the telephone call.

If you feel some reticence to talk to government representatives about President Kennedy's autopsy, I think I can sympathize with your position. We are aware of the letter prepared on November 26, 1996 by CAPT Robert O. Canada, and addressed to you, which confirmed in writing (upon threat of court martial) previously issued verbal orders from the Surgeon General of the Navy to discuss with no one events connected with your official duties on the evening of November 22-23, 1963. What you may not be aware of is that in 1978, at the request of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, the then Surgeon General of the Navy, Vice Admiral W. P. Arentzen, MC, USN, attempted to lift this order of silence by sending you a letter dated March 13, 1978 which permitted you to talk to members of the HSCA if you wished to do so. It appears that this letter was returned to the Navy as undeliverable due to a change in address; for this reason we assume that you may have never seen this document which lifted the order of silence regarding the President's autopsy. Copies of both letters are enclosed for your convenience. As you may be aware, numerous other persons who participated in the autopsy spoke with the staff of the HSCA during the course of their investigation, without repercussion.

On the other hand, we are aware that you have also chosen to grant at least two filmed interviews, and reportedly, approximately 13 telephonic interviews with independent researchers over the years regarding your role and observations during President Kennedy's autopsy; and furthermore, that you apparently participated voluntarily in a Manhattan News Conference regarding JFK autopsy forensic evidence in November, 1993. There are numerous issues that have arisen as a result of various statements which have been attributed to you by various researchers, by news organizations, or as a result of statements you have made during filmed interviews. It inevitably follows that the Review

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Board would be interested in any observations you can contribute that would fill in existing gaps, or otherwise clarify, the record of President Kennedy's autopsy.

As the senior of two enlisted X-Ray technicians present at the autopsy, and as the person reputed to have both physically taken the X-Rays of President Kennedy at autopsy, and couriered the film upstairs at Bethesda for developing (and back down again to the morgue), you surely must understand that you are an invaluable witness to history, and that your observations should be formally put on record. Newspaper accounts or private researchers may sometimes distort or inaccurately report the statements of individuals, either inadvertently, or in the interests of promoting a particular story or theory; some of the purposes of the Review Board, on the other hand, are to objectively identify, locate, clarify, and place records in the National Archives for posterity, so that the American people can independently study them in the future and decide for themselves their relative merits and significance. It is our understanding that you were never interviewed by either the Warren Commission, or by the HSCA; thus, we are interested in recording for the record the observations and recollections of the technologist who took the X-Rays of President Kennedy at his autopsy.

First, I would like to make clear that the Review Board is not affiliated in any way with any private researcher, and has no vested interest in proving or disproving the theories or ideas of any of those who are independently studying the Kennedy assassination. Second, we have no affiliation whatsoever with either the Warren Commission, Rockefeller Commission, Church Committee, or with the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) formal investigations which inquired into various aspects of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and therefore have no vested interest in either upholding or refuting the findings of any previous government body. A review of the explanatory materials which we mailed to you in March will verify that we are an independent Executive Branch agency born out of a broad bipartisan consensus, enacted into law in the JFK Act, that all records related to the assassination should bear the presumption of immediate release. Our primary function is to locate and declassify assassination records; secondary functions include clarifying existing records, and investigating the circumstances when records are found to have been destroyed. You will also note, upon reviewing these materials, that we have the power to subpoena, and the power to grant immunity.

The Review Board would like very much to invite you to come to Washington to provide your testimony, under oath, so that a permanent record may be made of both our questions regarding X-Rays taken at the President's autopsy, as well as your responses and observations. The spirit in which this deposition will be conducted will be in the interests of clarifying the record and attempting to resolve conflicts in the record, and will in no way be adversarial. Some people whom we have deposed have requested that we issue them a subpoena for a deposition. If you desire, we will do

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this in your case, or if you feel this is not necessary, we can arrange for your testimony under oath without resorting to the formality of a subpoena deuces tecum. The Review Board will of course cover your expenses (airfare and per diem) for your trip to Washington.

A member of my staff will be contacting you sometime during the month of June to coordinate arrangements for your testimony under oath. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to call us at the above number. Mr. Tim Wray, Chief Analyst for Military Records, or Mr. Douglas Horne, a Senior Analyst, will be glad to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

David G. Marwell
Executive Director

Enclosures