

NAME: Jerrol Custer

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE: 9920 Saltsburg Rd., Pittsburgh. PA 15239
(412) 793-4031

ROLE DURING PRESIDENT'S AUTOPSY: Was the senior of two Navy enlisted X-Ray technicians at the JFK autopsy.

See Master List for summary of interviews; there was no HSCA interview (details below).

INTERESTING LEADS/CONFLICTS WITH OFFICIAL RECORD:

- LIFTON INTERVIEW: In 1979, told David Lifton that: (1) the President's head wound was so large he could put both his hands in the wound; (2) his personal opinion, from comparing what he saw with his hunting experience involving gunshot wounds to animals, was that a bullet exited the rear of the President's head; (3) he exposed, took upstairs for processing, and returned to the morgue X-Rays showing that the rear of the President's head was blown off; and (4) that on his second or third trip upstairs with JFK X-Rays in his arm in need of processing, he saw Jacqueline Kennedy enter the lobby of Bethesda surrounded by reporters and secret service agents--at this point, he says his secret service escort steered him away from this group entering the lobby so that they would not make contact. (Discrepancies: (1)The lateral X-Rays in the record today do not show the back of the President's head missing--they show the back of the head badly fractured, but seemingly intact; (2) the massive size of the head wound described by Custer is at variance with the smaller, 5-7 cm wound described by at least 3 medical personnel at Parkland--Carrico, Peters, and Crenshaw; and (3) Custer's vivid recollection that he was carrying the second or third set of JFK X-Rays upstairs for processing when Jacqueline Kennedy entered Bethesda, if correct, is evidence that President Kennedy's body arrived at Bethesda well before the official motorcade from Andrews AFB, and therefore by separate means, thus breaking the chain-of-custody for the body of the slain President.)

-LIVINGSTONE INTERVIEWS: Researcher Harrison Livingstone interviewed Jerrol Custer several times during 1990 and 1991. Key points from the numerous issues addressed are summarized below, by category:

NUMBER OF X-RAYS: Custer claims he took more X-Rays than are now in the official collection, in particular of the head area--Custer claims he took at least 5 films of the skull (which is at variance with the 3 skull X-Rays in the official record--2 laterals, and one A-P); these 5 films of the skull included an oblique/tangential view of the hole in the head. Custer also remembers taking lateral X-Rays of the chest showing the thoracic and lumbar spine (which do not appear to be in the existing official collection).

BRAIN: Custer told David Lifton on film circa late 1979, and told researcher Livingstone circa 1990/1991, that there was no brain in President Kennedy's cranium. (Point of interest: this corroborates Paul O'Connor's claim of no brain inside the cranium, but seems to be in disagreement with James Jenkins' claims that he witnessed Humes exclaim "this brain has fallen out in my hands-the spinal cord has been surgically cut," and that he remembers infusing a brain. Theoretically, all of these people could be correct, providing they are describing different

conditions of the body at different times in the autopsy.)

INTACT BULLET OR LARGE FRAGMENT FALLING FROM BODY AT AUTOPSY: Custer told Livingstone that a deformed (mushroomed), essentially intact bullet fell from the back of the President's body when he was lifted up to place an X-Ray film under his head shortly after the body arrived at the morgue; he claims it came from the area of vertebrae C6 or C7 at the base of the back of the neck. (On another occasion Custer called it a fragment.) He claims that an autopsy pathologist picked the fragment up with forceps and placed it in a bottle of formaldehyde. (Points of interest: (1) Admiral David P. Osborne, who was a Navy Captain and Chief of Surgery at Bethesda on 11/22/63, and who eventually worked his way up to Deputy Surgeon General of the Navy, saw an intact, unmarred bullet fall from the President's "clothing" at the autopsy, and says that he and several others, including Secret Service personnel, held the bullet in their hands. Although his story was discounted by the HSCA, one wonders whether he and Custer are describing the same event; and (2) Sibert and O'Neill signed a receipt for a missile received from CDR James J. Humes on the night of November 22, 1963. Although Chief Boyers told HSCA interviewers that the receipt for a missile was really for two very tiny skull fragments, one must wonder whether the "receipt for a missile" was in reality for the slug described by Custer and Osborne.)

AUTHENTICITY OF SKULL X-RAYS: Custer reiterated to Livingstone on various occasions what he told KRON-T.V. in 1988, which was his opinion that the existing skull X-Rays are not authentic; i.e., do not faithfully represent what he took, because they appear to show frontal bone missing, but no occipital bone missing---while in reality what he saw himself was the reverse of what the lateral X-Rays now show.

WITNESS TO UNEXPLAINED POST-AUTOPSY ACTIVITY: Jerrol Custer has told Livingstone that on November 23, 1963 he was pulled aside by Dr. Ebersole (the autopsy radiologist) and Dr. Loy T. Brown, head of Radiology at Bethesda, and was ordered to repeatedly X-Ray skull fragments with bullet fragments taped to them with a portable X-Ray machine. The rationale for this behavior offered to Custer by Dr. Ebersole was that this activity was in support of a bust being made of Kennedy.

AUTHENTICITY OF AUTOPSY PHOTOS: Custer told Livingstone that there was a loose flap of scalp in the back of the President's head, but that it was so badly shredded, and so much was missing, that there is no way that this flap of scalp could account for the various autopsy photos which seemingly show the back of the President's head intact.

CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY OF THE PRESIDENT'S BODY: Custer told Livingstone during two interviews that the Officer of the Day at Bethesda, and alternatively the chief of security, told him on 11/22/63 that Kennedy's body would be arriving at Bethesda via helicopter from Walter Reed hospital. (Discrepancy: this conflicts with the official history, which is that JFK's body was driven directly from Andrews AFB to Bethesda inside the bronze, ceremonial Dallas casket. If true, this hearsay recounted by Custer is corroborative of the claims of Dennis David--of a separate, earlier casket entry at the Bethesda morgue--and of Paul O'Connor, that the President arrived at Bethesda in a different casket and different wrappings than those he left Dallas in. Custer should be asked to recall, if possible, the name(s) of that person, or those persons, who gave him this information. This hearsay, if true, is also consistent with Custer having already X-Rayed JFK's body when he sees Jacqueline Kennedy entering the

Bethesda complex through the front lobby.)

REASON FOR NO HSCA INTERVIEW: Custer told Livingstone that an HSCA investigator called him at 2 A.M. one morning and started questioning him in a very brusque manner; Custer says he put him off by saying, in so many words, that he wanted (1) proof that the order of silence was lifted; and (2) the interview to be done in person, in Pittsburgh. Custer says that after the unpleasant phone call at 2 A.M., he never heard from the HSCA again.

CONTACT WITH ARRB: Custer has, on two occasions, been uncooperative with ARRB staff on the telephone, even though each telephone call was preceded by a carefully crafted letter. **END**