

NAME: Paul K. O'Connor

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE: 5309 N.W. 24th Place, Gainesville, Florida 32606
Telephone: (904) 372-8229

ROLE DURING PRESIDENT'S AUTOPSY: Was an enlisted laboratory technician who assisted with the President's autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital. (Technically, was a student enrolled at the Bethesda laboratory school, studying to become a medical technologist.) As an enlisted man enrolled in the laboratory school, he stood duty "watches," and as such assisted the pathologists on duty with any autopsies which occurred "on his watch." November 22, 1963 was his "duty day," and as such he was tasked with assisting in JFK's autopsy.

-Along with James C. Jenkins, whom he always "pulled duty with," O'Connor helped set up for the autopsy, assisted the prosecutors in performing it, and was tasked with cleaning the morgue after the autopsy and embalming were completed.

-See Master List for summary of interviews (including HSCA interview).

INTERESTING LEADS/CONFLICTS WITH OFFICIAL RECORD:

-THE 2-CASKET CONTROVERSY: Says President's body arrived in a "pinkish grey" shipping casket, which was a basic slate-grey color, except for a pinkish tinge around the edges. (Discrepancy: The President's body left Parkland Hospital in a heavy, ornate bronze metal coffin.) Furthermore, he has described the shipping casket as a lightweight, cheap metal box with head screws on it, and without any siderails. (Discrepancy: The Dallas casket from the O'Neal Funeral Home was extremely heavy, was not grey or pinkish-grey in color, had side rails on it, but did not have any head screws or turnbuckles on it.)

-THE BODY WRAPPING CONTROVERSY: Says President's body was inside a closed, zippered, rubberized "body bag" inside the shipping casket. (Discrepancy: The President's body was not placed in a rubberized, zippered body bag before it left Parkland Hospital. Instead, it was wrapped in sheets: one sheet around the body, and another wrapped around the head; the President's body was then placed into the ornate bronze viewing casket, with a translucent, whitish colored rubberized sheet or mattress cover placed underneath the head and shoulders in order to keep blood off of the satin lining of the casket.) Further says that after the body bag was unzipped, the President was nude inside, except for a sheet wrapped around his head. (Discrepancy: the President's body was not nude when it left Parkland--a sheet had been wrapped around the body.)

-BRAIN: Says that there was no brain in the cranium at Bethesda when the sheet was unwrapped from around the President's head--he has emphatically and consistently reiterated this same story, since he was first contacted by the HSCA in 1977. He insists that there was nothing inside

the cranium “but splattered brain matter”...”It was gone...everything was gone. There were bits of brain matter laying around inside the cranium, but other than that, that was it.” O’Connor has clarified when asked that he literally means “no brain”: no right cerebral hemisphere, no left cerebral hemisphere, no cerebellum, no lobes of any kind visible or present. In support of this, he states that he never had to perform a craniotomy on JFK--this was normally one of the duties he would have performed at autopsy. (Discrepancy: the Autopsy Protocol says, rather simply and enigmatically, “The brain is removed...”, not precisely indicating whether one of the prosectors removed it, or whether the body was received with the brain already removed by someone else. James C. Jenkins, the other enlisted autopsy technician in attendance that night, says that Dr. Humes removed the brain, but that it literally fell out into his hands without the normal cutting procedures being accomplished. Jenkins described this brain as being “small, female, and hard to infuse,” as if the major blood vessels had been previously severed and had retracted as a result. The 3 prosectors--Humes, Boswell, and Finck--examined a brain subsequent to the autopsy at an unspecified time, and listed its weight as 1500 grams, more than what is usually described as the weight of an average male brain. One of the Parkland physicians, Dr. McClelland, has repeatedly stated that about one third of the entire brain was missing; another, Dr. Kemp Clark, told Arlen Specter that the right occipital lobe and part of the right parietal lobe--of the right cerebral hemisphere--were missing when he examined the wound in Dallas; Dr. Humes in 1992 stated that about two thirds of the right cerebral hemisphere was missing, which seems consistent with what Drs. McClelland and Clark said, but inconsistent with the brain weight of 1500 grams Humes listed in his Supplementary Autopsy Report dated 12/6/63.)

-CIVILIAN CONTROL OR INTERFERENCE WITH AUTOPSY: Has spoken on film of large numbers of civilians in the morgue, and described them as “sinister-looking.” He says that the civilians would hold many private, animated conversations amongst themselves, and then often direct, or redirect, the course of the autopsy by telling the prosectors to stop what they were doing and to move on to another procedure. (James C. Jenkins has corroborated O’Connor’s comments about civilians interfering with the autopsy, only in greater detail--see Fact Sheet on Jenkins.) O’Connor has also spoken on film of RADM Burkley frequently interfering in the autopsy by ordering the prosectors not to perform certain procedures.

-AUTOPSY PHOTOS/HEAD WOUND: Has stated on film and on videotape during two separate interviews that several of the autopsy photographs represented to be of the President’s so-called “wounds” are “fakes” and do not represent the way the back of the President’s head really looked as he viewed it in the morgue at the autopsy; he emphatically states in these interviews that the back of the President’s head “was gone.” (Discrepancy: in at least 3 of the autopsy photographs, the back of the President’s head appears intact, which is inconsistent with virtually all of the Dallas and Bethesda eyewitness observations.)

-AUTOPSY PHOTOS/THROAT WOUND: Has also stated to two different researchers that

what looks like a smooth tracheostomy incision was an ugly, jagged, irregular, blown-out wound in the anterior neck, and has opined to one researcher that the “Stare of Death” photographs have been retouched in the area of the neck incision to make it look much smoother in the photographs than it did to him in real life. (Point of interest: this allegation about the actual appearance of the wound in the morgue is supported by Dr. Humes’ description of “widely gaping, irregular edges,” and could be corroboration for allegations of body-tampering for purposes of removing evidence; i.e., removal of a bullet which may have entered the anterior neck in the front and lodged on top of the right lung after striking and damaging the trachea. Dr. Humes did report a 5 cm bruise on top of the right lung, and was interested enough in it to illuminate it and order it to be photographed. If the photo was retouched, the motive would be to remove evidence of body-tampering--the widely gaping, irregular edges which may have resulted from post-mortem surgery.)