

**Topic Outline**  
**for Depositions of**  
**James W. Sibert and Francis X. O'Neill, Jr.**  
(As of September 4, 1997)

- I. Professional Experience Prior to November 22, 1963
  - A. Formal Education
  - B. Law Enforcement/FBI Experience Up Until 1963
    - (1) Training
    - (2) Duty Assignments up through Hyattsville in 1963
  - C. Autopsies (how many prior to 1963?)
- II. Are you free to speak completely openly about this matter? Any prohibitions whatsoever now, or in the past? When was your last contact with FBI officials about any matters dealing with the JFK Assassination? Did you ever speak with Director Hoover about the autopsy, or your interviews with Secret Service Agents Kellerman, Greer, and Behn?
- III. How notified of assassination/What was your assignment on 11/22/63? Who directed that you go to Andrews, and why? [MD 151--page 1]
- IV. **Timeline and Sequence** of Major Events November 22-23, 1963
  - A. Andrews AFB
    - (1) Your arrival time/points of contact with USSS in motorcade/what were you told about transportation of the body and autopsy arrangements?
    - (2) Arrival of Air Force One--time/observations
  - B. Motorcade to Bethesda
    - (1) Departure Andrews/Arrival Bethesda (times)

- (2) Details of what you did/what you observed from the time of arrival at front entrance until you reached morgue
  - (a) Did you ever lose sight of President's casket in gray Navy ambulance?
  - (b) Time ambulance left front of NNMC; time arrived morgue loading dock.

C. Casket:

- (1) Time entered morgue
- (2) Whom did you assist? How was it carried or transported into the morgue (i.e., by what physical means--hand carried, rollers, church truck, dragged, etc.?)  
[MD 46--pg 2, MD 47--pg 2]
  - (a) Taken into anteroom (cold room) or morgue itself?
  - (b) Did you assist a military casket team, or civilians? How many people did you assist? Affiliation?
  - (c) Did you witness the entry of a casket by the joint service casket bearer team? Show the witness MD 163, page 1 ("2000 entry"--i.e., 8:00 P.M.) And page 3, para 2B. (Brigadier General McHugh replaces YN2 Barnum as a casket bearer as the casket is taken into the morgue from the loading dock.) Comment.
- (3) Describe Casket
  - (a) Did you ever see any other caskets that night (other than the one you helped take into the morgue)? Where? When? Describe.
  - (b) Show the witness MD 164: JFK's casket being taken aboard Air Force One at Love Field at approx. 2:14 P.M. CST, 11/22/63. Is this the casket they saw?
  - (c) Describe automobile you helped remove casket from--color, type.

Were there any other vehicles (specifically, a black hearse) near the loading dock, either when you assisted with the casket entry, or following the conclusion of the autopsy? If so, please describe.

(4) Describe meaning of "tight security immediately placed around autopsy room by U.S. Navy and Secret Service." [MD 151, pg 1 of FD-302]; if you were kept outside morgue, for how long? Who was inside when you were not?

(a) Did you witness casket opening? (Time)

-Who else was present for casket opening?

-Wrappings: sheets? (Body or head or both?) body bag?

-Who lifted body onto morgue examining table?

(b) Did you witness taking of pre-incision x-rays? Pre-incision photographs? (Sibert and O'Neill appear to disagree about this in the record): [See MD 46--pg 2 and MD 47--pg 2]

D. Autopsy Proper: Time of first incision/time completed.

(1) How did you know autopsy was completed?

(2) Did you witness the commencement of the embalming procedures? (Time)

E. Your departure: when did you leave? What activity was in progress when you left? Your destination/activity remainder of evening. [MD 151-page 4 of FD-302.]

IV. Events at Autopsy/Conclusions:

A. Initial appearance of body: when did you first see? Describe appearance of wounds when you first saw them. (EXECUTE DIAGRAMS OF HOW WOUNDS APPEARED WHEN YOU FIRST SAW THEM)

B. Describe procedures performed by pathologists--what did they do, and in what order?

C. If not covered, ensure following issues covered:

(1) Bullets or bullet fragments found--describe number and size.

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File: 4.0.2 (JFK Medical) and 4.0.5 (Sibert-O'Neill Depositions)

- (a) Was a receipt executed for any fragments or bullets found? What did receipt say? Format? Who prepared it? (Chester Boyers? Dennis David?) [MD 46--pg 5] [MD 47--pgs 4-5]
- (2) Back wound: discuss transit vs. non-transit issue
  - (a) When discovered? Explain meaning of "latter (sic) stages of autopsy." [MD 151-page 4 of FD-302]
- (3) Back wound: how did prosecutors determine angle of entry? (Fingers or probes?) [MD 151-page 4 of FD 302]
- (4) Did you see a brain removed from the cadaver? If not, did you see a brain in the morgue during the autopsy? Was there a brain, or a portion of one, in the cadaver when the head wrapping was removed?
- (5) Brain questions:
  - (a) Was it x-rayed after removal?
  - (b) Was it photographed after removal?
  - (c) Was it weighed after removal?
  - (d) Describe damage to brain. [DRAW SKETCH OF DAMAGE TO BRAIN.]
- (6) How many additional x-rays were taken (and what views) after incisions were made on the body?
  - (a) Head x-rays after incisions?
  - (b) Chest/abdomen after incisions?
- (7) Photography during autopsy:

- (a) Who took photographs? Who directed what photos were taken? How many cameras in use by how many people/who took photos? If more than one photographer, how did their roles differ? (Close-ups vs. medium/long shots; tripod vs. hand-held)

-Riebe  
-Knudsen

- (b) Questions:

-Views: supine? On side? On stomach? Sitting up? Full body?  
-Were probes photographed in the body?  
-Bruise on right lung: photographed? Inside or outside body?  
-Entry wound in back of skull: how many photographs of it, and from what angles?  
-Did you see film seized and exposed to light by a Federal Agent?

- (8) **Surgery of head area:** discuss. [MD 151--page 3 of FD 302; MD 46, page 4.]

- (9) **Tracheotomy:** was it probed, or enlarged surgically at any time? Sutured before or after autopsy? **Was it ever considered as a possible exit wound--for a bullet or a bullet fragment or a bone fragment--by any of the prosectors?**

- (10) Skull fragments brought into morgue during autopsy: Who? When? HOW MANY? Describe. What were prosectors told about it. Was it x-rayed during the autopsy? Who x-rayed it, and where? [X-Ray techs, or Dr. Ebersole? Portable machine or main laboratory machine upstairs?] How many skull fragments were x-rayed during the autopsy? If more than one, were they x-rayed together, or separately?

(a) Did anyone present state from what part of the head the large fragment came? [MD 60, page 5]--Ebersole

(b) Did the prosectors attempt to locate from where the large skull fragment had been dislodged, i.e., where it fit in the large defect in the skull? [Thompson, page 109]

- (11) Was there contact with Dallas by prosecutors? Did you witness any telephone calls between the prosecutors and Parkland hospital physicians in Dallas? Did you place any calls to Dallas yourself? Did you witness any calls to Dallas by anyone in the morgue for any reason? [MD 160--page 2; MD 60--pages 4 and 5, and 47]
- (12) Conclusions of prosecutors as to how many bullets struck body, from what direction, and types of bullets that caused each wound (i.e., jacketed vs. soft-nosed).[MD 47--page 6]
- (a) Did others try to influence prosecutors as to procedures used or conclusions reached?
- (13) Consider showing them Richard Lipsey's HSCA Interview Summary and asking for comment on his recollections--do they refresh FBI Agent's recollections, and do they agree or disagree with Lipsey?--namely, that 3 bullets struck body, vice 2, and that low head entry exited front of throat. [MD 87] Also use MD 162 (Rankin's reference to fragment exiting throat). **If these were not final conclusions, do you recall them being discussed in a speculative way during the autopsy as the prosecutors tried to figure out what happened?**
- (14) Did you see, or did you hear the prosecutors discuss, evidence of exit (i.e., a hole or a notch in the bone) anywhere in the margins of the large exit defect in the skull? (Humes and Finck denied to W.C., but then described evidence of exit in 1967 Military Review with the photographs in front of them.)
- (15) Posture of President's body during examination: supine, on side, sitting erect, on stomach?
- (16) Was the President's head supported during the autopsy, or laying on the morgue table? (Metal stirrup, or wooden block?)
- (17) Was there a towel under the head, or a bare metal table during the initial photography session?
- (18) Entry wound in skull: was it a small, well-demarcated hole in a solid plate of

bone, or did a fragment have to be reinserted in the skull to complete the circumference of the entry wound? (i.e., was it initially contiguous with the large defect, or separate from and below it?)

- D. Note-taking at autopsy by pathologists/others:
- (1) Which of the 3 pathologists took notes during the autopsy? Did others besides the pathologists (i.e., the Navy medical technologists assisting the prosecutors, high-ranking Naval Officers or Bethesda administrators, or Secret Service agents) take notes?
  - (2) Do you recall anyone looking for missing notes after the autopsy, or anyone collecting or confiscating notes after the autopsy?
  - (3) Did you ever see any of the pathologists' notes, or a handwritten draft, or a preliminary version, or any written version of the Navy autopsy report prior to December 23, 1963?
  - (4) Prior to its officially recorded transmittal to the FBI (December 23, 1963), did you hear anyone discuss the Navy autopsy report, or Navy conclusions?
- E. After preparation of your FD-302 about the autopsy on November 26, 1963, and your FD-302s about your interviews with Kellerman, Greer, and Behn on November 27, 1963, did you ever (in late 1963, and in early 1964 prior to your interview by Mr. Specter on March 12) discuss the autopsy or its findings with FBI officials? If so, who? When? Why?
- F. When did you first become aware that the findings of the Navy autopsy report conflicted with your FD-302 about the autopsy? [MD 161]
- (1) When did you first read or sight the Navy autopsy report?
  - (2) At that time, what did you think about the discrepancies between its conclusions and the conclusions you reported in your FD-302?
  - (3) Once you became aware of those discrepancies, did you take any action or discuss the inconsistencies in the two reports with any FBI officials? If yes,

with whom did you discuss? (And did you write a report on the discrepancies, or defending your own report?) If not, why not?

- G. Did you know ASAIC Robert Bouck of the Secret Service? Between 1963-65, did you ever see the autopsy photographs or x-rays? Have you EVER seen them?

V. Questions About Documents:

- A. MD 151 ("Sibert-O'Neill Report"):

- (1) Authenticate
- (2) Why not dictated until 11/26/63?
- (3) What was source for list of names of autopsy attendees? (USSS or your own notes?) Was USSS making its own list of names of attendees?  
  
- "Dr. George Bakeman, U.S. Navy" ??? (page 3)
- (4) Totals for photographs and x-rays taken (page 5): did you count yourself or were you given a count by someone else? [MD 46--page 5]
- (5) Apparent typescript irregularities:
  - (a) Page 1: Air Force "One": can you explain the offset of the word "One"? Was a change made to draft? If so, what was the previous word in this space?
  - (b) Page 3: "by the U.S. Navy and Secret Service." Was an acronym/agency name removed from this sentence? If so, explain.
  - (c) Page 4: "autopsy inspection of the area of the brain,"...what is the explanation (if any) for the space before the word "inspection?"
- (6) Page 3: explain what is meant (in paragraph on x-rays) by "the next largest fragment appeared to be at the rear of the skull at the juncture of the skull



bone.” (DRAW DIAGRAM ON ANATOMICAL DRAWING)

- B. MD 152 (Formal Interviews of Kellerman, Greer and Behn):
- (1) Who directed that these be done? Why?
  - (2) Were they aware, and were they concerned about inconsistencies in Kellerman’s statements between 11/22/63 interview (MD 151) and this interview on 11/27/63? (Re: spoken remarks of President Kennedy after being shot.)
    - (a) Also, did you view Zapruder film and compare Kennedy’s reactions with Kellerman’s description of his actions in this interview?
  - (3) Why was the order of arrival and departure of Air Force One and Two discussed with SAIC Behn? Did you (the FBI) bring this up, or did he? Why?
- C. MD 149 (TELEX to Director from SAC, Baltimore dated 11/23/63): authenticate and comment.
- D. MD 153 (FBI Summary of Interview by Arlen Specter on 3/12/64):
- (1) Explain circumstances of this document’s creation.
  - (2) On page 2, please explain the meaning of your answer of “7:17 P.M.” to Specter’s question “What was the time of the preparation for the autopsy at the hospital?” What exactly happened at 7:17? How did you interpret his question?
- E. MD 154 (Specter memo of March 12, 1964 summarizing his own interview of Sibert and O’Neill):
- (1) Examine and comment on contents. Any inaccuracies? Omissions?
- F. SIBERT: MD 85 (HSCA Interview Summary)

- (1) Authenticate and discuss.
- G. SIBERT: MD 155 (Unsigned HSCA Affidavit) and MD 46 (Signed Version Prepared by Sibert Himself)
- (1) Authenticate and discuss. Explain why you did not want to use HSCA version; explain differences.
    - (a) Surgery of head area [MD 46, page 4]--discuss why doctors changed mind in detail.
    - (b) Casket entry: "O'Neill and I and some Secret Service agents..." Discuss. [MD 46--page 2]
- H. O'NEILL: MD 86 (HSCA Interview Summary)
- (1) Authenticate and discuss.
- I. O'NEILL: MD 47 (Signed HSCA Affidavit)
- (1) Authenticate and discuss.
    - (a) Page 5--what was not accurate about the RYDBERG drawings later produced? [MI 12, 13, 14]
    - (b) Page 2--"Sibert, Greer, Roy Kellerman and I placed the casket on a roller and transported it into the autopsy room." Discuss--time, who else assisted, etc. What kind of roller?
    - (c) Page 6--in what way did you disagree with the location of the thorax wound made by Dr. Boswell on a drawing for the HSCA in 1977? [MD 159]
- J. MD 69 (Receipt for Bullet):
- (1) Discuss--this is a receipt for "a missile," not two small fragments.

- (a) Why did you sign something so imprecise without asking that it be retyped, or without making a pen-and-ink change?
  - (b) Who prepared? (Boyers [MD 151-page 3; MD 62] or Dennis David? [David told ARRB that he typed a receipt for four fragments for a "Sibert"])
  - (c) **EXAMINE MD 176 [FBI memo about bullet "lodged behind the President's ear"]**: Comments--do you know why Mr. Belmont would write this on the evening of 11/22/63 (after 9:18 P.M.)? Was such a bullet (or fragment) noted at the autopsy? Did you call in this information from the morgue?
- K. MD 157 (Memo, Sibert and O'Neill to SAC, Baltimore dated 6/29/66): read and authenticate.
- L. MD 158 (Memo, Sibert to SAC, Baltimore): Have Sibert read and authenticate.

VI. Examination of Bullet Fragments, Autopsy Photographs and X-Rays:

- A. Bullet Fragments (CE 843): Can you authenticate? [MD 151]
- B. X-Rays:
  - (1) Do these 3 head x-rays look like those you saw on 11/22/63? (Address both number of head x-rays and general appearance.)
    - (a) Posterior of skull on both laterals.
    - (b) Large fragment on A-P.
    - (c) Is the apparent fragment trail on the laterals and the A-P consistent with what you described on page 3 of MD 151?
  - (2) Do these body x-rays appear consistent with the number (and views) taken on

11/22/63?

C. Photographs:

(1) Examine for authentication purposes--discuss apparent major inconsistencies between autopsy photographs and the drawings of head wound executed by Sibert and O'Neill for the HSCA (MD 85 and 86)

- (a) back wound
- (b) skull entry wound
- (c) large skull defect
- (d) back of head