

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

August 28, 1996 (Revised March 27, 1997)

Written By: Doug Horne

Subject: Questions Regarding Supplementary Brain Examination(s) Following the Autopsy on President John F. Kennedy

A review of HSCA records, coupled with attempts by ARRB staff to clarify the record of President Kennedy's autopsy (by interviewing and deposing witnesses, and by studying the chain-of-custody of the autopsy protocol and the autopsy photographs and x-rays) has revealed a pattern of circumstantial evidence indicating that two different brains may have been examined subsequent to the completion of the autopsy on the body of John F. Kennedy. Corroborating evidence in support of the hypothesis that there were examinations of two different brains about one week apart, each of which was represented to its audience as "the brain of President Kennedy," has accumulated as the ARRB staff has proceeded in its work, and as a result the author feels it is time to place the hypothesis on record. The implications of two such events having taken place (and specifically, in such a manner that one of the two examinations must have been of a brain which was *not* President Kennedy's but which was knowingly represented as such) are of obvious importance, and would be difficult to overstate. The goal of this memo, however, will be limited primarily to simply marshalling and expositing the circumstantial documentary evidence which indicates that two separate brain examinations, both supplemental to the autopsy on the body of President Kennedy, may have occurred about one week apart in late November 1963, contrary to the official record as it has heretofore been presented to the American people.

Brain Examination # 1 (approximately Monday, November 25, 1963):

A large body of evidence supports a brain examination having taken place approximately 3 days after the death of the President:

- a. HSCA Summary of August 17, 1977 Interview with Dr. Boswell (attachment 1): HSCA staffer Andy Purdy wrote on page 5 that Dr. Boswell remembered the brain was examined two days after the autopsy, and on page 13 that he recalled the brain was examined two or three days after the autopsy. On page 5 Purdy recorded Boswell's recollection that persons present included himself, Dr.

Humes, Dr. Karnei, HMC Mason, and a couple of technicians. On page 11 Purdy again recorded that Dr. Boswell said Dr. Karnei was present at the supplemental brain examination.

On page 5, Purdy wrote that Boswell was unsure whether the brain had been serially sectioned or not, and said "the records" would show whether serial sections had been performed or not.

b. HSCA Summary of August 12 and August 15, 1977 Interviews with Autopsy Photographer John Stringer (attachment 2): HSCA staffer Andy Purdy wrote on pages 12, 13 and 15 of this report that Stringer indicated the brain was examined 2 or 3 days after the autopsy. On page 12 Purdy recorded that Stringer recalled Drs. Humes and Boswell were present along with him at the brain examination. On page 13 Purdy wrote that Stringer recalled the brain was sectioned (seemingly implying serial sectioning), yet on page 15, during his second interview, Stringer is quoted as saying that although the doctors did cut some pieces from the brain, that they did not section it serially.

c. JAMA Article in May 27, 1992 Issue (attachment 3): on page 2800, author Dennis Breo quoted Dr. Humes as saying "He (Dr. Burkley) told me that the family wanted to inter the brain with the President's body." Since the President was buried in a sealed mahogany casket, inside a heavy, 3000-lb. vault permanently sealed with tar (and in a public gravesite at Arlington beneath the apparatus of an eternal flame), this statement attributed to Dr. Burkley implies that Humes was pressured by Burkley to perform the supplementary brain examination prior to the November 25, 1963 state funeral of President Kennedy; in fact, Breo left unanswered the unspoken question of when the brain was actually examined. Breo only provided a date (of December 6, 1963) for the *hand-transmittal* of Humes' supplemental autopsy report (attachment 4) to Dr. Burkley, and does not address when the brain was examined or when the supplemental report was prepared. The author could not find any mention in this article of who was present at the supplementary brain exam.

d. HSCA OCR dated 5/4/78 of Telephonic Interview with Elsie Closson (attachment 5): HSCA staffer Mark Flanagan recorded in this OCR that Elsie Closson, Admiral Galloway's secretary, typed the autopsy report (the protocol) on a Sunday, and the supplemental report "a few days later." Typing the supplemental report "a few days" after Sunday, November 24, 1963 is consistent with a brain examination conducted 2 or 3 days after the autopsy, providing the report was typed after a delay of 2 or 3 days following the brain examination -- but is not consistent with a brain examination held, for example, one week or more after the autopsy. In the context of this Elsie Closson OCR, the handwritten date of "12/6/63" found on the supplemental report (attachment 4) is consistent only with Dennis Breo's finding that the

supplemental report was transmitted on December 6, 1963; in other words, the handwritten "12/6/63" notation on attachment 4 should no longer be viewed as the date the brain examination was conducted, as was the case for years by many in the research community. In the absence of a typed date on the supplemental report, or of any statements in the text regarding when the brain was examined, the "12/6/63" notation becomes insignificant (and, in fact, misleading) when compared with the weight of the remainder of the evidence supporting an early brain examination.

e. Transcript Excerpt from February 13, 1996 ARRB Deposition of Dr. James J. Humes (attachment 6): Humes was generally supportive of the Boswell and Stringer recollections of a brain exam shortly after the autopsy, as indicated on pages 108-109, and 146-148 of the transcript. On pages 108-109, the transcript reads:

Mr Gunn: "Were any sections taken at all from the brain?"

Dr. Humes: "Not at that time...we did take certain sections a day or two later, whatever it was, from the location -- we didn't divide the brain like we often do. You know, we often make a so-called bread loaf-type incision...but we didn't do that with this brain, because the next thing you know George Burkley wanted it. We might have gone on to do that, but when he came and said that they wanted the brain, fine, you know. I'm not going to argue about it."

This line of questioning was again pursued on page 146:

Mr. Gunn: "Did that (brain exam mentioned on page 108) happen within one or two days after (the autopsy)"?

Dr. Humes: "Yes. Shortly after. I can't tell you what day now."

Continuing this inquiry, on pages 147-148 the transcript reads:

Mr. Gunn: "Are you able to connect in time the difference in time between the time that you delivered the autopsy protocol to Admiral Burkley and the time that you examined the brain?"

Dr. Humes: "...a couple of days, two or three days. I don't know exactly how long."

Mr. Gunn: "Was that a couple of days after the November 22nd autopsy?"

Dr. Humes: "A couple of days after Sunday, after they were delivered."

Thus, Humes first testified that a brain examination took place 1 or 2 days after the autopsy, and subsequently testified that after further thought, he believed it took place shortly (about 2 days) *after* the protocol was delivered to Burkley on Sunday, November 24, 1963. The OCR of Elsie Closson's HSCA interview (attachment 5), which stated she typed the supplemental report "a few days later," meaning a few days after Sunday, November 24, 1963, strongly corroborates this Humes testimony. It seems likely that a detailed document like the supplemental autopsy report would not have been typed the same day as the brain examination, but at least one day afterwards (in order to leave time for the pathologist's drafting and word smithing of the technical report); a typed report in support of a Tuesday brain examination, for example, would most likely have been prepared one day later, on Wednesday, and Wednesday was indeed "a few days," i.e., 3 days (taking Elsie Closson's remarks literally), after the protocol was delivered to Rear Admiral Burkley at the White House. Since Wednesday, November 27, 1963, is the outside limit of the estimate given by Elsie Closson for the preparation of the supplemental report, and since this is compatible with Humes' recollection of conducting the brain examination shortly after the autopsy protocol was delivered to Dr. Burkley on the previous Sunday, the author therefore concludes, based on the Humes and Closson recollections, that the *extreme outside limit* for the conduct of the earliest of two hypothesized supplemental brain examinations was probably Tuesday, November 26, 1963.

On page 148 of the transcript Dr. Humes testified that Dr. Burkley (the military Physician to the President) told him outright that Robert Kennedy intended to inter the brain with the President's body. This corroborates the identical account attributed to Humes in the 1992 JAMA article (subpara c. above), and lends weight to the possibility that the brain exam took place on the morning of Monday, November 25, 1963 (after the protocol was delivered to Burkley on Sunday evening, but prior to the President's funeral Monday afternoon), rather than on Tuesday, November 26 (after the funeral, when it would have been impossible to inter anything with the body, because of the sealed 3000-lb. vault in which the casket was encased).

Dr. Humes was not directly asked during the deposition who was present at the supplementary brain exam, nor did he volunteer the names of the attendees. However, on pages 146-147 the substance of ARRB's question (on timing of the examination) implied that Boswell and Stringer were present, and in Dr. Humes' response to this question, he did not question or object to the basic assumption of the question (i.e., that Boswell and Stringer were present).

f. Transcript Excerpt from February 26, 1996 ARRB Deposition of Dr. "J" Thornton Boswell (attachment 7): Dr. Boswell testified with some certainty that the supplemental brain examination occurred on Monday, November 25, 1963, and also testified that he believed Dr. Humes relinquished the brain to Admiral Burkley on Monday, November 25, 1963. Excerpts from subject testimony follow:

From pages 50-51:

Dr. Boswell: "We had a neuropathologist from the AFIP come over, and we took it (the brain) out of the formalin after it was fixed a couple of days--in fact, on Monday...and we put it back in the formalin, and it was delivered to Admiral Burkley in a bucket..."

Mr. Gunn: "When was it delivered to Admiral Burkley?"

Dr. Boswell: "I believe it was on Monday...because we wrote up an addendum to the autopsy, I think on Monday, after we had examined the brain...and I think he (Jim Humes) took the paraffin blocks and the tissue slides with the brain and the addendum down to Admiral Burkley on Monday."

This line of questioning resumed on pages 54 and 55, and although Dr. Boswell began to have some doubts about the timing, he ultimately concluded again, on page 55, that the brain was examined and delivered to Burkley on Monday (November 25, 1963).

Dr. Boswell further testified, on pages 50 and 188, that President Kennedy's brain was not serially sectioned, and clarified on page 188 that only partial sections of the brain were taken at the supplementary brain exam.

Boswell claimed on pages 128 and 129 that attendees included himself, Dr. Humes, John Stringer, and AFIP neuropathologist Richard Davis; he recalled that Dr. Finck was probably not there. Boswell estimated that a total of approximately 15 people may have been present.

g. ARRB Call Report dated April 8, 1996 Summarizing Interview that date with Autopsy Photographer John T. Stringer (attachment 8): In the author's interview summary of ARRB's April 8, 1996 telephonic interview of John Stringer, the following Stringer recollections were recorded:

- the brain exam was 2 or 3 days after the autopsy;
- it occurred on a workday, in the morning;
- the brain was serially sectioned (author's conclusion based on Stringer's characterization of it being cut up like a piece of meat), and the individual sections were laid out on a light box and photographed next to I.D. tags;
- Dr. Humes and Dr. Boswell were present, along with a corpsman; Dr. Finck was probably not present.

h. Transcript Excerpt from July 16, 1996 ARRB Deposition of John T. Stringer (attachment 9): On pages 146-147 of the transcript, Mr. Stringer testified regarding his recollections as to the timing of the supplementary brain examination:

Mr. Gunn: "Approximately how long after the autopsy of President Kennedy did you go to the supplementary examination?"

Mr. Stringer: "I'd say it was three or four days. I don't remember."

Mr. Gunn: "Is there any event that you can connect the timing of the supplementary autopsy to? For example, a workday versus a weekend?"

Mr. Stringer: "I think it was on a Monday, after a weekend. I'm not sure, but I think."

Mr. Gunn: "President Kennedy was buried on a Monday. Do you have any recollection--"

Mr. Stringer: "No. It wasn't the day of the funeral, no."

Mr. Gunn: "Do you recall whether it was before or after the funeral?"

Mr. Stringer: "No, I don't."

Mr. Gunn: "Why is it that you feel confident that it was not the day of the funeral?"

Mr. Stringer: "Because I saw the funeral on television....Now, this was done in a morning...when they had it out of the formula."

The author concludes that it may have been Monday after all, Mr. Stringer's recollections of watching the President's funeral on television notwithstanding. President Kennedy's funeral was the afternoon of Monday, November 25, 1963: the casket left St. Matthew's at 1:30 P. M., and Air Force One overflew the grave site during the funeral itself at 2:54 P.M.-- therefore, Mr. Stringer's first recollection that the examination was on a Monday, and his later testimony that the examination took place in the morning hours, are *not* inconsistent with his recollection of having watched President Kennedy's funeral on television.

On pages 149 and 151, Stringer testified that Drs. Humes, Boswell and himself were present at the brain examination, and volunteered that he was not sure whether there was a corpsman in the room or not.

The following testimony was given regarding sectioning of the brain on pages 148-149:

Mr. Gunn: "Do you recall how you got the message that it was time to start the supplementary exam?"

Mr. Stringer: "Well, Dr. Humes, I guess, called and said, 'We'll meet in the autopsy room and section the brain.'"

Additional testimony regarding sectioning of the brain follows:

Mr. Gunn: "What happened during the supplementary exam, if you could describe the process?"

Mr. Stringer: "They took it out, and put it on the table, and describe it as to the condition, took some sections of it. We took some pictures of it. I had a copy board there with the light coming from the -- well, from underneath and with the lights down on it, and shot pictures of the brain."

Mr. Gunn: "As it was being sectioned?"

Mr. Stringer: "Yes."

Mr. Gunn: "Were the sections small pieces, or cross sections of the entire brain?"

Mr. Stringer: "If I remember, it was cross sections."

Mr. Gunn: "And what was the purpose of doing the cross section of the brain?"

Mr. Stringer: "To show the damage."

Further along in his testimony, lengthy questioning took place regarding the brain photographs in the National Archives which are purported to be images of President Kennedy's brain. Based on observations of multiple inconsistencies between his recollections regarding the brain photographs he took, and those in the collection, the following summary exchanges took place between Mr. Gunn and Mr. Stringer, commencing on pages 217-218:

Mr. Gunn: "You said that you had not recalled that there were any basilar photographs of the brain of President Kennedy. Can you identify whether the photographs that are in front of you now are basilar or superior views of a brain?"

Mr. Stringer: "They're basilar."

Mr. Gunn: "...earlier in your testimony, you said there were identification cards that were used for identification of the brain when the photographs were taken. Was that correct?"

Mr. Stringer: "Well, there's a ruler there, but there's no identification on there."

Mr. Gunn: "Based upon these being basilar views of a brain and based upon there being no identification cards, are you able to identify with certainty whether these photographs before you now are photographs of the brain of President Kennedy?"

Mr. Stringer: "No, I couldn't say that they were President Kennedy's. I mean, there's no identification."

Earlier, on pages 152, 153 and 157 Mr. Stringer testified that he used duplex film holders during the supplemental brain exam and did not use a press pack; that the color film he shot was Ektachrome; and that if he had shot black and white film, that it would have been portrait pan film. Subsequently in the deposition, the following exchanges took place on pages 219-220:

Mr. Gunn: "Can you identify from the negatives in front of you whether those photographs are from a press pack?"

Mr. Stringer: "I think they are. Yes."

Mr. Gunn: "Would it be fair to say, then, that by your recollection, that the black and white negatives in front of you now were not taken by you during the supplementary autopsy on President Kennedy?"

Mr. Stringer: "Correct. This is Ansco."

Mr. Gunn: "What is Ansco film?"

Mr. Stringer: "Well, its super high pan. And I think its from a film pack."

Concluding, the following exchanges took place on pages 223-225:

Mr. Gunn: "On the color photographs showing the superior view of the brain, do you recognize any identification tags or markings?"

Mr. Stringer: "Now, this film is also different than the other. You see the code in here? On all the other photographs, its Ektachrome."

Mr. Gunn: "Okay. And these are not Ektachrome notches, or you're not certain? It's just that they're different."

Mr. Stringer: "I'm not certain, but they're different. It's -- I think it's a different type of film. It could be Ansco film, like this."

Mr. Gunn: "Did you use Ansco film in the -- taking the autopsy--"

Mr. Stringer: "Not as far as I know."

Mr. Gunn: "-- photographs of President Kennedy?"

Mr. Stringer: "Not as far as I know."

Mr. Gunn: "Is there any question in your mind whether you were the photographer of these images that are before you right now?"

Mr. Stringer: "Yes, if it's Ansco film, and if it's a film pack. I have no recollection of using a film pack."

Mr. Gunn: "Do you see any identification markers or identification numbers on the photographs?"

Mr. Stringer: "No."

Mr. Gunn: "You've been shown all of the images of -- from the supplementary

autopsy. Did you see any images that would show a brain that had been sectioned in any way?"

Mr. Stringer: "No. No, I don't."

Mr. Gunn: "Are there any other photographs that you remember taking yourself during the supplementary autopsy that you haven't seen today?"

Mr. Stringer: "I had thought we had done some sections, cutting through the brain. But I don't see them."

Following the conclusion of his deposition, Mr. Stringer clarified, in answer to a direct follow-on question as to whether Dr. Finck had been present at the supplementary autopsy (the brain exam), that Dr. Finck was not present at the supplemental exam (see attachment 10).

Conclusions regarding brain examination # 1: This apparent event probably took place on Monday morning, November 25, 1963. [Robert Kennedy's insistence that the brain be interred with the body (in the context of a Monday afternoon funeral), and Boswell's firm recollection in his ARRB testimony that Monday was the day of the brain examination, coupled with the Boswell and Stringer recollections recorded by the HSCA of a brain examination 2 or 3 days after the autopsy, and Humes' ARRB testimony that the brain exam took place *after* he turned in the protocol to Burkley on Sunday, argue strongly for Monday as the most likely date, by far, for this event. Tuesday seems much less likely, since the chance to inter the brain with the body had passed, and a Tuesday brain examination does not fit the HSCA recollections of Boswell and Stringer of a brain examination conducted within 2 or 3 days of the autopsy.] Furthermore, the President's brain, which Dr. Boswell recalls having been returned to Dr. Burkley on the same day that it was examined (Monday), was most likely interred with the President's body subsequent to the public ceremony of the funeral -- after the dispersal of the large public crowds, following the end of the T. V. coverage of the funeral's events, and prior to sealing the casket inside the 3000-lb. vault. It seems likely, based upon the ARRB's deposition of John Stringer in July, 1996, that although John Stringer did photograph the supplemental brain examination held shortly after the autopsy, the photos of a brain in the National Archives today are *not* the photographs that he took at that event. The author therefore concludes that those photographs in the National Archives today which are represented to depict the brain of President Kennedy are photographs of a different brain, and are not images of President Kennedy's brain, since: (1) Stringer, Humes and Boswell have always claimed that Stringer was the sole photographer at the brain examination; (2) Stringer only attended one brain examination; and (3) Stringer feels reasonably certain he did not take the brain photographs in the Archives. It seems

highly likely that Drs. Humes and Boswell, and photographer John Stringer, were all present at the first brain examination, and that Dr. Finck was not. (Although Dr. Boswell told the HSCA, in 1977, that Dr. Karnei, and probably HMC Mason, were also present at the brain examination, and subsequently testified to the ARRB, in 1996, that AFIP neuropathologist Dick Davis and numerous others were present, no other witness has yet corroborated these recollections; therefore, although it is possible his recollections of additional attendees are accurate, in the absence of independent corroboration the author cannot treat these claims with the same degree of confidence as the presence of Humes, Boswell and Stringer.¹) The issue of who likely attended which brain examination will be discussed further below.

Brain Examination # 2 (conducted between Friday, November 29 and Monday, December 2, 1963):

Some evidence also supports a brain examination having taken place approximately one week (that is, 7-10 days) after the death of President Kennedy:

- a. The "Blumberg Report" Written by Dr. Pierre Finck in 1965: In early 1965, JFK autopsy prosector Dr. Pierre A. Finck sent two pieces of correspondence to the Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP), Brigadier General J. M. Blumberg, MC, U. S. Army. The first of these two documents (dated January 25, 1965) was a 2-page summary of Dr. Finck's participation in the autopsy of President Kennedy on November 22-23, 1963, and his subsequent testimony before the Warren Commission on March 16, 1964. The second document (dated February 1, 1965) is described by Dr. Finck himself as typewritten notes, and covers President Kennedy's autopsy on November 22-23, 1963; a subsequent brain examination which he attended; and his Warren Commission testimony. For the purposes of this memorandum, these two documents are joined together as one (attachment 11) and will hereafter be referred to as "The Blumberg Report;" the pagination for attachment 11 is unique to this ARRB version.

¹ARRB staff located and questioned both Dr. Richard Davis (on March 5, 1997) and Dr. Robert Karnei (on March 10, 1997) regarding whether or not they had attended an examination of President Kennedy's brain. Both men denied ever witnessing, or participating in, any examination of President Kennedy's brain. Their denials seemed genuine, but then so did Dr. Boswell's recollections of their having been present. Without independent corroboration, pro or con, this matter remains unresolved. (See attachments 21--ARRB report on the Davis interview, and 22--ARRB report on the Karnei interview.)

On page 7 of the Blumberg Report, Dr. Finck wrote the following:

“CDR Humes called me on 29 Nov 63 that the three prosectors would examine the brain at the Naval Hospital. I asked if a representative of the Neuropathology Branch of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology would be invited to the gross examination of the brain. Humes told me that no additional persons would be admitted. Humes, Boswell and myself examined the formalin fixed brain. A U. S. Navy photographer was present.”

This is a remarkable statement, coming from a meticulous and precise professional like Dr. Finck, for the following reasons:

- (1) He indicates that he was present at a brain examination on (or after) November 29, 1963, at least 4 days after the hypothesized earlier examination held on or about Monday morning, November 25, 1963. (Note that Dr. Finck states he was *called* by Dr. Humes on November 29, 1963 about the brain exam, and does not precisely state when the examination occurred, meaning that it could have occurred on November 29, or later.)
- (2) If true, Dr. Finck’s account of a brain exam separate and distinct from the first one, in the company of Drs. Humes and Boswell, would mean that Drs. Humes and Boswell were present at *two different* brain examinations, and that they have intentionally tried to obscure this fact from all official parties to whom they have spoken or testified about this matter over the past 33 years.

Perhaps equally significant, on page 8 of the Blumberg report, Dr. Finck wrote:

“The convolutions of the brain are flat and the sulci are narrow, but this is interpreted as a fixation artefact because the change was not observed at the time of autopsy.”

It is clear from the above passage that the brain examined by Dr. Finck on or after November 29, 1963 did not look the same as the brain he examined at the autopsy on November 22, 1963. While Dr. Finck assumes these changes in external appearance are artefacts due to fixation, another possible interpretation is that Dr. Finck observed and recorded changes to the brain’s external physical appearance simply because he was examining a different brain at the

time of the supplementary examination. Should anyone wonder whether Dr. Finck had an opportunity to examine the brain in any detail at the November 22, 1963 autopsy (since he arrived after its removal), they need only refer to the author's summary of the ARRB interview of Dr. Karnei held on May 21, 1996, in which Dr. Karnei recalled that President Kennedy's brain was carefully inspected outside of the body by Drs. Humes, Boswell and Finck (attachment 12).

One final quote, from page 8 of the Blumberg Report, follows:

“Color and black and white photographs are taken by the U. S. Navy photographer: superior and inferior aspects of the brain. CDR Humes takes sections...but does not make coronal sections in order to preserve the specimen.”

Navy photographer Stringer, who was present at the earlier brain exam on or about November 25, 1963, is on record in his ARRB deposition transcript (on page 153 of attachment 9) that he did not shoot basilar, or inferior, views of the brain, and in fact did not change his mind, even when shown photographs in the present-day collection in the Archives showing such views. This Finck recollection of witnessing a photographer shoot inferior views of the brain, therefore, corroborates that he was at a different examination than was John Stringer; and Stringer's conclusion that the black and white brain photographs in the collection today (Ansco super high pan film, shot with a film pack) are inconsistent with the type (portrait pan B & W) and format (duplex film holders) of the black and white film he shot at the brain exam he attended, along with the presence in the Archives of photographs of inferior (basilar) views of a brain, together corroborate that the brain photos presently in the archives were probably taken at this second examination witnessed by Dr. Pierre Finck. Furthermore, Dr. Finck's statement to Blumberg that coronal (serial) sections were not made in order to preserve the specimen is another indicator that Finck was present at the examination of a different brain from the one examined by Stringer, since Stringer clearly recalled coronal or serial sectioning, and photography of those sections, in both his ARRB interview, and at his ARRB deposition. [This also implies that Drs. Humes and Boswell, in their apparent concealment of the fact that there were two different brain examinations, are concealing primarily the fact that the brain was sectioned, and that photographs were taken of those coronal or serial sections on a light box.]

b. Transcript Excerpt from May 24, 1996 ARRB Deposition of Dr. Pierre A. Finck (attachment 13): When deposed by ARRB in May, 1996, Dr. Finck was questioned about the timing of the brain examination which he attended, commencing on page 115 and ending on

page 117:

Mr. Gunn: "Dr. Finck, earlier in the deposition you made reference to a supplementary examination of the brain...approximately how long after the autopsy did you conduct the supplementary examination of the brain?"

Dr. Finck: "I don't recall exactly when it was examined and the extent of the examination."

Mr. Gunn: "Again, I am not asking you to tell me exactly, but I'm just asking whether you remember whether it was within a day or two or whether it was within a week or two?"

Dr. Finck: "Oh, it was not a day or two. That's too short."

Mr. Gunn: "Who else was present when you were at the supplementary examination?"

Dr. Finck: "Oh, I would say Dr. Humes and Dr. Boswell probably. Who else I don't know."

Mr. Gunn: "Drs. Humes and Boswell, when they testified to the Review Board, had an initial recollection that they had done a supplementary examination within two or three days after the autopsy. There is no evidence that you were present as far as I am aware in a supplementary examination within two or three days after the autopsy. Do you have any knowledge whether there was more than one supplementary examination of the brain?"

Dr. Finck: "No."

Thus, Dr. Finck verified in 1996 that he did not attend a brain examination shortly after the autopsy.

Pages 120-122 of attachment 13 record Dr. Finck's testimony regarding other attendees at the supplemental brain examination:

Mr. Gunn: "Do you recall any other person in addition to Drs. Boswell and Humes being

present when you attended a supplementary examination of the brain?"

Dr. Finck: "No."

Mr. Gunn: "For example, was there anyone else there from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology?"

Dr. Finck: "I don't remember."

Mr. Gunn: "Do you know the name Dick Davis as being affiliated with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology?"

Dr. Finck: "Yes, I have known Richard Davis, a neuropathologist."

Mr. Gunn: "If he had been present at the supplementary brain examination, would you have recalled that do you think?"

Dr. Finck: "Probably so."

Mr. Gunn: "But you don't recall --"

Dr. Finck: "No."

Mr. Gunn: "-- his having been present?"

Dr. Finck: "No."

Mr. Gunn: "Do you recall whether there were any photographers present at the supplementary brain examination?"

Dr. Finck: "I don't."

It is important to note that Dr. Finck not only affirmed that he was acquainted with Dr. Richard Davis of the AFIP, but independently recalled that Dr. Davis had been a neuropathologist. Therefore, when Dr. Finck says he does not recall Dr. Davis having been

present at the brain exam he attended, and this testimony is compared to Boswell's ARRB testimony (that Dr. Dick Davis *was present* at the brain exam), Dr. Finck further corroborates that the brain examination he attended was a distinct and separate event from the one Boswell was describing to the ARRB when Boswell recalled the presence of Dick Davis. Furthermore, on page 7 of the Blumberg report (attachment 11), Finck reported to General Blumberg that he had recommended to Dr. Humes that an AFIP neuropathologist be present during the examination of the brain, and that Dr. Humes had refused his request. Thus, Dr. Finck's written report on the absence of an AFIP neuropathologist to General Blumberg, and his denial that Richard Davis was present during the brain exam in his ARRB testimony, are consistent with each other, and corroborative of the hypothesis that Finck attended an event separate from, and subsequent to, the first examination (in which Boswell claimed Dick Davis was present). [In the context of two different brain examinations, in which the second exam is of a brain which is not President Kennedy's, but which will be represented as such to Dr. Finck and in the photographic record, Dr. Humes' previously inexplicable refusal of Dr. Finck's recommendation to have *the AFIP neuropathologist* present makes sense for the first time to the author -- that is, if Dick Davis was present at the examination of President Kennedy's brain on or about November 25, 1963, his presence would not have been desired at a second brain examination.]

c. Summary Report of 6/21/96 ARRB Interview of Gawler's Funeral Home Embalmer Thomas E. Robinson (attachment 14): Former Gawler's embalmer Tom Robinson told ARRB that upon removal of President Kennedy's brain at autopsy, a "fist sized" portion was missing "in the back," corroborating the Warren Commission testimony and contemporaneous 11/22/63 written statements of numerous Parkland hospital doctors that President Kennedy had a defect in his posterior skull, and had suffered loss of brain tissue from the posterior portion of his brain. These observations are all germane to this subject because this new Robinson observation, corroborated by the Dallas observations of posterior skull and brain trauma (well documented elsewhere), provides a possible motive for orchestrating a second brain examination: if the absence of large amounts of posterior brain tissue, and the sectioning that surely would have documented that damage in great and irrefutable detail, was considered knowledge which had to be suppressed, an examination of a second (different) brain (exhibiting a "more acceptable" pattern of damage), with photographs to record a different pattern of damage (such as those now in the Archives), would be necessary.

d. HSCA Summary of April 25, 1978 Interview with Chief Petty Officer Chester H. Boyers, U. S. N., Chief Petty Officer in Charge of the Pathology Department of Bethesda Naval Hospital in November 1963 (attachment 15): HSCA staffer Mark Flanagan wrote (on page 4)

that Boyers recalled preparing paraffin blocks and tissue slides of tissue from the body on November 22, 1963 and that he prepared "six blocks of eight or twelve sections of the brain" on December 2, 1963.

This recollection by Chief Boyers of having prepared tissue slides of brain material is significant to this hypothesis; its importance cannot be overstated, for this date independently corroborates Dr. Finck's recollection of having attended a brain examination subsequent to a November 29, 1963 telephone call from Dr. Humes. Paramount to the confidence one should place in this recollection is the credibility of Chief Boyers.

Chief Boyers' recollection of working on tissue slides of internal organs and skin wounds on November 22, 1963 is corroborated by Dr. Boswell, who HSCA staffer Purdy recorded as saying (on pages 4 and 8 of attachment 1) that tissue slides were processed immediately, on the night of the autopsy (instead of the normal procedure of one week to ten days later), and that they were available to be read about noon on Saturday, November 23, 1963 (page 8 of attachment 1). Additionally, Dr. Boswell, in his ARRB deposition, confirmed (on pages 120-122 of attachment 7) that the tissue processing people received tissue from the body of the President on November 22, 1963, and that the processed slides were available for viewing on Saturday, November 23, 1963. Thus, Chief Boyers' recollection of having prepared the tissue slides of President Kennedy's skin tissue and internal organ tissue immediately (contrary to normal practice) is firmly corroborated by Dr. Boswell. Furthermore, Dr. Karnei told HSCA interviewers Purdy and Kelley in 1977 (on page 3 of attachment 16) that he recalled a Secret Service man assigned to the tissue processor all night, and reportedly said that the Secret Service was always present during the processing to prevent the taking of artifacts. The author concludes, therefore, that Chief Boyers is a credible witness in regard to tissue processing and that there is no reason to believe he erred in regard to stating that he processed brain tissue on December 2, 1963.

In fact, Boyers' statement that he processed brain tissue on December 2, 1963 may indicate that the supplemental brain examination took place on that date, namely, Monday, December 2, 1963. [Dr. Finck only referred to November 29, 1963 as the date he was called by Humes, and wrote that the brain he saw was examined subsequent to that telephone call.]

In conclusion, Boyers' statements to HSCA staff members allow the author to conclusively bracket the time window of the second ("late") brain examination as sometime between November 29, 1963 and December 2, 1963 -- possibly inclusive of those dates, but not before, or after, those dates.

e. HSCA Summary of August 16, 1977 Interview with Mr. Leland Benson, Supervising Histo-Pathology Technician at Bethesda Naval Hospital in November, 1963 (attachment 17): HSCA staffer James Kelley wrote that Benson recalled he was not on duty at the lab after 4 P.M. on November 22, 1963, and did not return to work at the lab until Monday morning, November 25, 1963. Kelley wrote that Benson recalled a routing slip was sent Monday morning and that the tissue sections provided were processed in wax blocks which were then shaved into micro sections and stained by hand. He also recalled that brain tissue was processed, and stated he never saw President Kennedy's brain himself (meaning in its intact state).

In view of the fact that the recollections of Chief Boyers and Boswell reveal that tissue from President Kennedy's body was processed late Friday evening-early Saturday morning, and was ready for review Saturday, the author finds it highly likely that the tissue Mr. Benson processed Monday morning was probably from the first brain examination conducted Monday, November 25, 1963. His recollections for the HSCA, therefore, rather than contradicting Chief Boyers, more likely corroborate a very early (Monday) brain examination which was a separate event from the brain examination supported by Chief Boyers on December 2, 1963.

f. Inventory and Receipt for Material Transferred from Vice Admiral Burkley and the Secret Service to Mrs. Lincoln at the National Archives on April 26, 1965 (attachment 20): In paragraph 9 of this much-perused document there appear two entries regarding memos written about photography (from the Naval Photographic Center's Lt. (jg) V. Madonia to James K. Fox of the Secret Service, and from the Secret Service Intelligence Division's SA James K. Fox to SAIC Bouck of the Secret Service's Protective Research Section) -- and both are listed in this inventory as having been written on *November 29, 1963*, the same date that Dr. Finck recalled (in his written report to General Blumberg in 1965) that he received a call from Dr. Humes about the examination of the brain. One of these two memos is even described as "...concerning the processing of film in the presence of Lt. (jg) V. Madonia, USN...". The written record of the processing of film on this date, found in an inventory recording the transfer of President Kennedy's medical materials, and autopsy related documents, and autopsy film, is entirely consistent with, and possibly corroborative of, a supplemental examination of a brain (and associated photography) having occurred on this date.

Conclusions regarding brain examination # 2: The second brain examination hypothesized in this memo apparently took place between November 29, 1963 and December 2, 1963 (inclusive), as evidenced by the precise recollections of Dr. Finck and Chief Boyers (the word "precise" meaning,

in this context, that they provided exact calendar dates for events related to a brain examination, rather than giving guesstimates such as “a few days” or “2 or 3 days” later, as other witnesses characterized their recollections). The two photography memoranda reportedly dated November 29, 1963 in the Burkley-to-Lincoln Receipt of April 26, 1965 may be corroborative of a “late” (November 29, 1963) brain examination, i.e., the event reported by Finck in the Blumberg Report. Drs. Humes and Boswell appear to have been the two individuals present at this exam who were *also* present at the first hypothesized examination. Dr. Finck was the key player present at this second apparent brain examination who was not present at the first apparent brain exam on November 25, 1963. The identity of the photographer at the second hypothesized brain examination remains unknown as of this date; however, if the pattern in the evidence in support of two separate brain examinations accurately reflects two different events, then the photographer at the second exam was certainly not John Stringer. The most likely motive for conducting a second (“late”) brain examination would have been to suppress the true nature of the President’s head wound(s) by recording a different pattern of damage (in a different specimen). In support of this contention are the following indicators -- the apparent absence of Dr. Finck at the first brain examination; possibly having the tissue from the President’s actual brain (the “early” exam) processed by a different person (Benson) than the individual (Boyers) responsible for processing the tissue from the second brain (the “late” exam); Dr. Humes’ refusal to allow an AFIP neuropathologist to witness the second brain examination (when that same individual, Dr. Davis, may have witnessed the first examination); and Dr. Humes’ decision not to serially section the brain which Dr. Finck examined (when, according to Stringer’s 1996 recollection, the brain examined at the “early” exam was indeed serially sectioned) -- indices which collectively point to a carefully controlled, compartmented operation in regard to orchestrating who was present, and what procedures were performed, at the two separate brain examinations. Under this hypothesis, the purpose of including Dr. Finck at the second brain examination would have been to legitimize that procedure in the eyes of history, and would also have permitted the creation of both photographs, and an official witness, to record the fact that the “brain of record” (from the “late” exam) was not sectioned. Exactly when the decision may have been made to conduct the examination of a second brain remains unknown; however, the author has always found it curious that Dr. Pierre Finck was present at neither the first hypothesized brain examination, nor at NNMC Bethesda on Saturday, November 23, 1963, when Humes and Boswell read the tissue slides and examined an early draft of the autopsy report.

Ambiguity and Uncertainty in the Record:

In retrospect, the handwritten date (of 12/6/63) in the upper right-hand corner of the supplemental autopsy report (attachment 4) may intentionally have been affixed to that document to give the impression that the President’s brain was examined well after the November 22, 1963 autopsy, and

close-to, or on, the date scribed onto the supplemental report by hand. In view of Rear Admiral Burkley's pressure on Dr. Humes to complete the autopsy protocol by Sunday evening (November 24th), and to quickly examine the President's brain so that it could be interred with the body of the President per RFK's orders, as well as typist Elsie Closson's recollection that she typed the supplemental report "a few days" after she typed the protocol on November 24, 1963, it seems likely that the handwritten date of 12/6/63 cannot represent either the date that the hypothesized "early" brain exam was performed, or the date the corresponding report for the "early" exam was prepared. The key to explaining this may very well be the apparent condition of the brain depicted by the photographs in the Archives -- that brain, according to numerous medical professionals who have examined the photographs, is a very well fixed brain. It appears very gray in color, and very firm, in the photographs (i.e., is not pink in color at all, and does not appear to be soft in any way), and seems to most observers to represent a brain as it would appear after *at least* 10-14 days of fixation. A supplemental autopsy report believed by its readers (because of a handwritten date in the upper right-hand corner) to have been written on 12/6/63 (two weeks after the assassination) would be consistent with a brain which appears this well-fixed in photographs; similarly, it would be very difficult to successfully represent these photographs as depicting a brain examined after only two-and-one-half days of fixation.

To the point, references to when the brain examination was conducted in the Warren Commission testimony of Dr. Humes are quite vague and imprecise, and give the distinct (and possibly intentional) impression of an event which occurred *well after* the autopsy, rather than very shortly after the autopsy, as Humes, Boswell and Stringer all testified to before that ARRB in 1996, and as Boswell and Stringer told the HSCA in 1977. Specifically, in Dr. Humes' Warren Commission Testimony (attachment 18), page 354 of WH 2 reads:

Mr. Specter: "May the record now show I am handing to you, Dr. Humes, an exhibit marked Commission Exhibit 391, and will you identify what that is, please, doctor?"

Dr. Humes: "Exhibit 391 is listed as a supplementary report on the autopsy of the late President Kennedy, and was prepared some days after the examination. This delay necessitated by, primarily, our desire to have the brain better fixed with formaldehyde before we proceeded further with the examination of the brain which is a standard means of approach to study of the brain. The brain in its fresh state does not lend itself well to examination....To continue to answer your question with regard to the damage of the brain, following formal infixation, Dr. Boswell, Dr. Finck and I convened to examine the brain in this

state.”

Noteworthy in the above exchange is Humes' comment that the report (CE 391) was prepared "some days" after the examination (probably meaning some days after the autopsy on the body -- a contextual interpretation based upon the next sentence in his testimony). This is contradicted by typist Elsie Closson, who told the HSCA that the supplementary report was prepared "a few days" after the protocol was typed on Sunday, November 24th; and by Dr. Boswell, who told ARRB during his 1996 deposition that he thought the brain and the supplemental report were both delivered to Rear Admiral Burkley on Monday, November 25, 1963. Most troublesome in the above statement are the remarks that the delay in preparing the report was "...necessitated by, primarily, our desire to have the brain better fixed with formaldehyde before we proceeded further with the examination...;" the implication of a brain examination many days after the autopsy, which is borne by this statement, has been contradicted by the recollections of Boswell (in 1977 and 1996), Stringer (in 1977 and 1996), and Humes himself (in 1996), that the brain was examined very soon (within 2 or 3 days) after the autopsy on the President. Finally, Humes' testimony that he and Boswell examined the brain together with Finck (in light of the date markers of November 29, 1963 provided by Finck, and of December 2, 1963 provided by Boyers) confirms to the author, in view of what is now known as a result of HSCA and ARRB clarification efforts, that Dr. Humes was trying to "sell" a late brain examination (rather than an early one) to the Warren Commission.² It may well be, in the context of this hypothesis, that with the passage of years, Drs. Humes and Boswell, the two individuals who seem to have been present at both brain examinations, may have become careless about which memories they selectively recall during questioning.

During their ARRB depositions, both Dr. Humes and Mr. Stringer independently recalled that there was some disruption of the right cerebellum of the President's brain (on page 106 of the Humes transcript, and on pages 225-226 of the Stringer transcript). The basilar brain photographs in the archives today show no disruption to the right cerebellar hemisphere, but do show some disruption to the left cerebellar hemisphere. The author's opinion is that this discrepancy further impugns the

²The author believes, moreover, that Humes had no choice but to characterize a "late" brain exam to the Warren Commission (i.e., his use of the phrase "some days" after the autopsy, and by calling the time interval a "delay")--that is, to describe the timing of the second event, rather than the first event--since Dr. Finck was present in the same room when he testified on March 16, 1964.

brain photos in the archives (as not representing President Kennedy's brain, but instead representing the brain of another person). The skeptic, however, might argue that since the left cerebellum *is* somewhat disrupted in the present photographs, that President Kennedy's brain was genuinely damaged in this area (either by a bullet or bullet fragment, or by the process of removal during the autopsy), and that Humes and Stringer, over 32 years after the assassination in 1996, have simply confused left for right in their recollection of this damage.

On page 6 of attachment 16, Purdy and Kelley wrote that Dr. Karnei had no information regarding a brain examination subsequent to the autopsy of President Kennedy; he suggested to them that normally a neuropathologist is present for the examination of abnormal brains, such as President Kennedy's, which had suffered considerable damage. This implied denial that he was present by Dr. Karnei makes problematic Dr. Boswell's recollection, on page 11 of attachment 1, that Dr. Karnei was present at the brain examination, yet indirectly corroborates Dr. Boswell's 1996 ARRB testimony that Dr. Dick Davis, the AFIP neuropathologist, was present during the brain examination. Dr. Karnei made clear and unambiguous his denial that he witnessed an examination of President Kennedy's brain to the author on March 10, 1997 in a follow-up telephonic interview.

Somewhat more problematic is John Stringer's unexpected testimony in 1996 during his ARRB deposition that he had no recollection whatsoever of ever having spoken with any people from the HSCA; this seems to be contradicted, somewhat forcefully, by attachment 2, HSCA interview summaries of both an August 12, 1977 telephonic interview of Stringer, and of a joint visit to the Archives by Stringer and HSCA personnel on August 15, 1977 to view the post mortem photographs from President Kennedy's autopsy. Furthermore, a September 11, 1977 letter from Mr. Stringer to Andy Purdy of the HSCA staff (attachment 19) confirms conclusively that Mr. Stringer did indeed have dealings with the HSCA, contrary to his lack of any memory of such events in 1996. While Stringer's 1996 testimony that the President's brain was serially sectioned, if accurate, seems to conclusively not only separate one brain examination from the other, but also seems to provide a likely rationale for suppressing the results of the first examination, the skeptic might say that a man who cannot remember two important interviews regarding the Kennedy assassination from 1977 (or a letter he wrote to a Congressional committee staff member) cannot be taken seriously when his recollection of the sectioning of a brain in 1963 is at variance with every other witness to that event

who can be located today.³ Furthermore, if the HSCA interview summaries (in attachment 2) are accurate, Stringer seems to have contradicted himself in 1977 on the issue of whether or not the brain was sectioned: on page 13 of the HSCA Interview Summary, Purdy wrote that Stringer said on August 12, 1977, "He believes that when he took photographs of the brain two or three days later, the doctors sectioned the brain;" but on page 15 Purdy wrote that Stringer said three days later on August 15, 1977, "He remembers that in the examination of the brain, the doctors took some sections but said that he 'didn't section the brain serially.'" Additionally, the reader will have noted that Dr. Humes has twice stated he did not serially section the brain, in both the supplementary report (attachment 4), and in his 1996 ARRB testimony, as quoted above; Dr. Boswell similarly specified that the brain was not serially sectioned during his ARRB testimony; and Dr. Finck indicated it was not serially sectioned in the Blumberg Report. The question of Stringer's credibility in regard to whether or not the brain was sectioned serially at the examination he attended cannot be conclusively resolved at the present time given the state of the evidentiary record as it exists today. While Mr. Stringer appeared to be quite firm and convincing in 1996 (in both his telephonic interview with ARRB staff in April, as well as during his deposition in July) that the brain he saw examined was serially sectioned, because this testimony was contradicted by his own HSCA interview comments on August 15, 1977, one must wonder if his recollections represent the phenomenon known as "memory merge" -- specifically, can his 1996 recollections of the President's brain having been sectioned be a product of having witnessed numerous autopsies over the years at Bethesda Naval Hospital? Alternatively, of course, Humes has spoken eloquently and forcefully (in both the JAMA article in 1992, and to ARRB in 1996) of the pressure he was placed under by Admiral Burkley to complete the examination of the President's brain in time for it to be interred with the body--so perhaps it truly was sectioned at a November 25, 1963 examination. [As Dr. Davis explained to ARRB staff on March 5, 1977, a brain fixed by profusion, which was the Bethesda procedure at that time, could be ready for cutting in 2 or 3 days.] Each student of the Kennedy assassination, in the absence of new evidence with which to judge Stringer's testimony, must make an independent subjective judgment of his credibility in regard to whether or not the brain he photographed was sectioned. Ultimately, the author believes that the case for two brain exams having taken place stands on its own with, or without, Stringer's recollection (of the brain at the "early" examination having been sectioned) being confirmed as a valid recollection.

³On the other hand, when Dr. Richard Davis told ARRB staff on March 5, 1997 during a telephonic interview that brains fixed by profusion (the methodology employed in the early 1960s at Bethesda) could be ready for cutting as soon as 2 or 3 days after autopsy, this information made Stringer's recollection of a brain sectioning 2 or 3 days after President Kennedy's autopsy seem within the realm of reasonable possibility. (See attachment 21.)

A final ambiguity is that Dr. Humes has contradicted himself as to whether or not he received a receipt for the brain which he turned over to Admiral Burkley. In the JAMA article (attachment 3), Dr. Humes is quoted on page 2800 as saying: "Admiral Burkley gave me a receipt for the autopsy materials, including the brain." Yet in his ARRB deposition, when asked whether he received a receipt from Admiral Burkley for the President's brain, Dr. Humes testified (on pages 153-154 of attachment 6): "I don't think there ever was one." The skeptic may claim that this reversal of position invalidates other recollections of Dr. Humes, including those of an early brain exam. To the author, it seems this reversal may simply indicate Humes' possible realization that the date on such a receipt, if that receipt was for a "later" (second) brain exam, may by its timing have invalidated the testimony he had just given that the President's brain was examined very soon after the autopsy. Unless or until such a receipt is ever found, the true meaning of this contradiction cannot be conclusively determined -- it can only be debated.

The key to confirming that two separate brain examinations really took place is to juxtapose:

- a. The consistency with which an "early" brain exam without Dr. Finck is independently remembered today by Humes, Boswell and Stringer (and corroborated by Elsie Closson's recollections of when it was typed); with
- b. The realization that Finck's 1965 Blumberg Report recollections of a "late" brain examination on or after November 29, 1963 is seemingly corroborated by both Dr. Humes' 1964 Warren Commission testimony, in which Humes himself volunteered that he, Boswell and Finck examined a brain "some days" after the autopsy once the brain had been allowed to fix properly, and by Navy Chief Boyers' recollection of having prepared brain tissue slides on December 2, 1963. (Additionally, Stringer's belief in 1996 that he probably did not take the brain photographs presently in the Archives suggest that they are from this second, "late" brain exam.)

The attached data chart summarizes in simplified, graphic form the evidence in support of both "early" and "late" brain examinations following the autopsy of President John F. Kennedy.

