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Andy Berger, and an escort of a policeman. I was there probably within three to five minutes of the time the President arrived. I went immediately in to see the President, and went to the table on which he was being treated, and immediately saw for all intents and purposes life did not exist, or could not be sustained. I talked to the doctors who were busily engaged in doing what was indicated and would have been indicated had there been any hope of salvation of the President. I gave them some hydrocortisone, to put in the intravenous which was being given, and also told them his blood type. There was no need for anything in my estimation, but they were correct in doing all possible procedures. I then contacted Mrs. Kennedy, who was sitting outside, and that is of record, and from then on it was my interest.

Where were we? [tape off, resumed]

When the President was on the Air Force One returning to Washington, Mrs. Kennedy, as has been noted, sat in the rear of the plane, next to the coffin bearing the President's remains. During the flight I contacted her, and stated that an autopsy would be necessary, and that I was perfectly willing to arrange to have it done at any place that she felt it should be done. She said, "Well, it doesn't have to be done." I said, "Yes, it is mandatory that we have an autopsy. I can do it at the Army hospital at Walter Reed, or at the Navy hospital at Bethesda, or any civilian hospital that you would designate." However, I felt that it should be a military hospital, in that he had been President of the United States and was, therefore, the Commander in Chief of the Military. After some consideration she stated that she would like to have the President taken to Bethesda. This was arranged by telephone from the plane, and it was accomplished. I accompanied the President in the ambulance going to Bethesda, and also accompanied him to the area where the autopsy was performed. And during the course of the autopsy I supervised everything that was done and . . . [phone call]

Bethesda
Burkley died with 1991 as
Cage 88

MCHUGH: You mentioned that you supervised the autopsy.

BURKLEY: I supervised the autopsy and kept in constant contact with Mrs. Kennedy and the members of

Burkley, Capt. Admiral Warren O
Correspondence

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Interview
Interview of Dr. Burkley
for the John F. Kennedy Library

I can't give exact timing on that, but it was--con- sidering the job that was being done--it was not excessive.

MCHUGH: I see. Do your conclusions differ at all with the Warren report of the circumstances or cause of death?

BURKLEY: My conclusion in regard to the cause of death was the bullet wound which involved the skull. The discussion as to whether a previous bullet also enters into it, but as far as the cause of death the immediate cause was unquestionably the bullet which shattered the brain and the calvarium.

MCHUGH: I see. The brain and the what?

BURKLEY: And the skull, calvarium.

MCHUGH: I see. Do you agree with the Warren Report on the number of bullets that entered the President's body?

BURKLEY: I would not care to be quoted on that.

MCHUGH: I see. Under the best circumstances would it have been possible to save the life of the President if all indicated medical procedures had been carried out successfully?

BURKLEY: It is unquestionably in my opinion that the President could not have survived, under any circumstances, nor regardless of who, or how many procedures were available, or what equipment was available. When I examined him, as I stated earlier, he was essentially no longer living. There may have been some cardiac action, but that was it [phone call] The physicians at the hospital in Dallas were completely justified, and were performing as any group of competent physicians should do, in that, until it is unquestionable that life does not exist, all efforts should be made to sustain

*Guaranteed
Burkley*

don't feel that they could have just said, "Well, this is the doctor's car." But it had not been established to that extent, at that time. Mrs. Lincoln and I discussed on numerous occasions that there should be a car--and the reason I mention Mrs. Lincoln, because she, from the stenographic and from secretarial standpoint, was many times needed and we attempted to ride in the car immediately behind the Secret Service. This would not occur again, I'm sure, because I would simply crawl into the car behind it, if it was the King of Siam. I wouldn't ride anywhere else.

McHUGH: Doctor, were the doctors in Dallas familiar with the illnesses that the President had?

BURKLEY: The doctors in Dallas would have no reason to have any knowledge of that, and they had no need to have any knowledge of that, because the question was one of assassination by gunshot and his previous history, other than the fact, that I gave them the neo-cortef to put in the solution, which also would be used in anyone, possibly, who had such a wound, to give them additional support. But as far as any knowledge, their need to have any previous knowledge, it was not indicated and therefore, in addition to that the inquiries concerning the medical background of the President by people who were dealing with the Warren Commission and the assassination are absolutely unfounded, because they have nothing to do with the assassination.

McHUGH: I see. They did make an attempt to find out though, did they not?

BURKLEY: They had no time to find out. I told them, they didn't--I went in and told them that this I wanted to put in the intravenous that was being given . . .

McHUGH: Surely.

BURKLEY: And they made no questions at all. There's a statement in one of them, that one of them ought

to do this, but that is not true, because I was the one who came in and gave it to them, and the doctors in Dallas never even mentioned that I was present. As far as I'm concerned it doesn't matter to me, because there was no reason to interject myself in a procedure which at that time was hopeless. In addition, I was not part of their team, and it would have interfered.

McHUGH: Did they, at that time, attempt to do a postmortem on the President, to learn about these things?

BURKLEY: They hadn't, not to learn about these things.

McHUGH: No, excuse me. Once it became apparent that the President was no longer, was beyond hope as far as . . .

BURKLEY: At no time--when the President was--there again I stood with Mrs. Kennedy, and one of the doctors came and said that they felt that the President was dead. I went over and checked him myself, and I pronounced him dead.

McHUGH: Surely.

BURKLEY: There again it is not entered by any of the Dallas people, and I came back to Mrs. Kennedy and said, "The President is dead." And we went over to the President and we said the prayers for the dead and various other things which have been recorded elsewhere, I believe.

McHUGH: Did the doctors there at that time then attempt to perform a postmortem?

BURKLEY: The coroner attempted to have the body retained there for a postmortem and investigation of the assassination. That was perfectly understandable, in that this condition existed. However, the people involved were not just anyone. It was the President of the