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U. S. NAVAL MEDICAL SCHOOL
NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

In reply refer to

24 November 1963

C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

*Sourced
in
M19*

I, James J. Humes, certify that I have destroyed by burning certain preliminary draft notes relating to Naval Medical School Autopsy Report A63-272 and have officially transmitted all other papers related to this report to higher authority.

J. J. Humes
J. J. HUMES
CDR, MG, USN

accepted and approved the date

*George A. Burkley
Rear Adm MC USN
Physician to the President*

This is the original of Humes' certificate that he burned a draft of the autopsy report. It is not the same as the copy printed by the Commission, 17H48, which does not include the handwritten approval of Dr. Burkley. Indeed, what can be said when the President's physician certifies that he accepts and approves the burning of evidence in the crime! See p. 261.

This certificate has led to the myth, propagated by Arlen Specter, that Humes burned his autopsy notes. "The record is plain," Specter told U.S. News and World Report, 10/10/66, "that there had been a series of notes taken by Dr. Humes at the time of the actual performance of the autopsy which had been destroyed." Specter knew better, since he put this certificate (absent the Burkley endorsement) into evidence and had it confirmed by Humes (2H373). As the certificate on the next page makes clear, the "autopsy notes" were preserved. What Humes burned he alternately described as "preliminary draft notes" (above) and "that draft" of the autopsy report later revised, (2H373).

Having been assured by Humes that the first draft of the autopsy report had been destroyed forever by burning, Specter asked not a single question, not even the simple, indispensable question: Why? On this the Commission's record is barren. Specter, however, would like the public to believe otherwise. He now claims Humes "explained his reasons (for burning) fully before the Commission"—in his testimony.