

CONFIDENTIAL

CHAPTER 5

JAMES CURTIS JENKINS

How? In what role a doctor's assistant very rank?

On October 8, 1990, I interviewed Jim Jenkins at some length. Jenkins was Dr. Thornton Boswell's assistant at the autopsy, and just nineteen years old. He has had a difficult time since those tragic events of 1963 dealing with the horror of what happened that night. It traumatised him rather badly, but I could readily see why he was assisting the doctor. Jenkins is a very intelligent and sensitive man who teaches University science courses today, and who went quite far in graduate studies of pathology.

Now he would like to investigate the case himself, and meet with some of the Dallas witnesses, as well as reunite with some of the other men from the autopsy.

Where did they list a name him?

"I was talked to by the Assassinations Committee, by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Purdy." (Andy)-- "Did they show you any pictures?" "They were very intimidating individuals...." "They lied to me...they both told me they were both lawyers, and then when you checked their identification, Kelly was an FBI agent, and when I talked to them, they really didn't want to know what I knew. They played games. To be honest with you, I got angry. They took me down to the legal library in Jackson to show me the pictures of the Warren Commission, which I had already...I already knew they were just....they were not real."

O'Connor?

"They were pictures of the body?"

"Well, yeah, the ones in the Warren Commission Report. (The drawings, not the photographs. These are highly inaccurate.)"

"Its been kind of a sore spot with me as far as David Lifton is concerned, and some of the other people. "Paul and I were the only two people there on duty that night, and I was in the morgue all night long. There's some things that I remembered, and every time I ever told anybody its always been "We don't really care--we want this, this and this!"

"They want you to say certain things."

"Yeah, so I haven't really done much about it. To be quite honest with you, I'm surprised that Paul and Custer talked to you after our first bad experiences."

Then we were not allowed to talk all of those years. They had each one of us under threat of court martial. Then I received an order that I could talk to Purdy and Kelly, but that was all. No-one else.

"I would like to sit down with the other people and verify with them and talk to them about what I remember and what they remember. I have some twenty questions for the people from Parkland, also. And for once I'd just like to get this thing cleared up in my own mind and get it over with."

See's plot: Source - Lifton

He does not remember Floyd Riebe. He said that he only remembers the people that he worked with: Humes, Boswell, O'Connor. He said that the handwriting that the WC published giving the organ weights and so forth were his handwriting. He spent almost the whole night at the head of the autopsy table.

"It wasn't necessary to surgically remove the brain from the skull. I remember Humes saying 'this brain fell out in my hands. The brain stem has been surgically cut.' The brain was there and it was intact, but it was damaged. It wasn't fused. I remember that. I remember it was difficult to infuse it because the bundle of _____ (an egg shape underneath the brain) was damaged and it was difficult to get the needle in. It would fuse and then we would drop it into a bucket of formaldehyde after it fused for awhile.

"I left the next morning and as well as I could remember, the brain was in the bucket. Those are the things I told Purdy and Kelly. They didn't even....they were so apathetic about reporting the stuff, they just breezed over it like it wasn't there.

"At that time I was in a PHD program in pathology, and they asked me questions like where is the occiput? I just got to the point where I didn't care to talk to them. (Oct 8, 1990)

The House Committee people showed him the artist's rendition of the drawings in the Warren Report and talked to him about a hole in the top of the head, and they were nothing whatsoever like that."

"Nothing like the Warren drawing?"

"No. The only thing that comes in close is the flap of scalp and bone a little anterior to the ear, which was similar to what we saw."

"Do you think that the Committee ignored you then?"

"Oh, yeah! I know they did."

"About the little entry wound--" (March 25, 1991)

(there is some unintelligible material here that may be important.)

"I looked at the back of the head but all I saw was the massive gaping wound. The head remained wrapped in towels until the men came in. We were specifically told not to lift the towels. And all the conversation about no brain--well, the head wound was not accessible at that point in time."

"All that happened in the anti-room where the cold boxes are. When the body came into the morgue, it came in on a stretcher wrapped in sheets. There was a casket already in there (in the anti-room or cold room) when this one came in." (March 25, 1991)

In response to my questions as to whether or not there was

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the book*

enough intact scalp on the back of the head to cover up the large hole described by all witnesses, Jenkins said "no."

"There was a hole in all of it." (the scalp and the bone.) There was a hole in the occipital-parietal area. I had seen a wound similar to that before.

"I just never could understand how they came up with the conclusions that they did. I don't go into the semantics and so forth that David Lifton went into in his book.

"The other thing that they told me was that there was a wound to the top of the head. I don't remember that. I could almost say that there was none."

"Were you there all of the time?"

"I was there all of the time. The only time I was away from the table was probably five or ten minutes when I was told to get a sandwich. But I did not leave the room."

"Were you there when the men from the funeral home came to dress the body?"

"There was only one man who came. And he was striking because I was in the military and because he came in with his bowler and his vest and so forth. He did everything. He did the embalming, and he did the cosmetics.

"Were any photographs taken during that period?"

"I'm not sure, to be honest with you. The only photographs that I remember were taken at the beginning of the autopsy." He recalls an older civilian who did the photographic work. In his later forties, or early fifties. Fifty-five." That would be John Stringer.

"I did not particularly like the way what I did was portrayed in Lifton's book. I think it was dramatic and sensational. He's after the money. I did a documentary for him, but I don't know if I'm on it. I've seen it in the stores but didn't buy it."

He said that when they did the autopsy the throat wound was listed as a tracheotomy, and "it looked like a trach." At that time no-one at the autopsy knew that there had been a bullet wound in the throat, because the tracheostomy performed in Dallas obscured it. "Dr. Boswell did look into the neck cavity. I remember that. If there had been a bullet in there it would have done considerable damage to the trach and the esophagus and so forth in that area.

He said that when the body was unwrapped and he first saw the throat wound, "it was pretty wide. It looked like a hastily done trach. But two and a half inches is, you know, kind of big. Dr. Perry had insisted to a Baltimore Sun reporter in 1979 that he had made no such large gash in the throat, but only slightly enlarged it to insert the breathing tube.

"I would say that it was at least an inch and a half or two inches wide," Jenkins said. I was real surprised at the fact later on that that was supposed to have been a bullet wound. We

found no bullets, no fragments in the body. I remember the arguments, the animosities because there weren't any found."

"With regard to the neck wound, I remember the animosities from the gallery (the viewing area overlooking the autopsy table where numerous officers and others observed) because it couldn't be probed into the chest cavity. They tried their damnest to do that, almost to the point of making an entrance wound into the pleural cavity. That was Dr. Boswell, trying to probe that neck wound. There was nothing found there.

"Stover was down on the floor behind me. Galloway was in the gallery. I didn't know Burkley. Stover was the one who finally told me to go and get something to eat. I walked behind him to the three little rooms just back there, got a sandwich, took a couple of bites and went back to the table.

"Everything from just above the right ear back was fragmented. It was broken up but it was being held together by the scalp.

"Was there an area of actual absence of scalp and bone?"

"Yeah, there was. There was an area probably along the midline just above the occipital area.

"In the occipital area?"

"Yeah, right at the occipital area. It was higher. One of the things I don't understand is that this would not have been low enough to have gotten into the cerebellum."

Jenkins does not remember the kind of damage to the cerebellum that was described in Dallas, but only to the rest of the brain on the right side.

He does not recall any damage to the face, but says that "they had some problems keeping the right eye closed after they were doing the cosmetics."

When asked about the X-rays showing the right front of the face missing, he said "I'm sure that's not the case." This put him in line with Dr. Boswell and all the other witnesses from the autopsy who have talked about it.

I also asked him if he had seen any damage to the left temple area. In Dallas, the death certificate said that the President had died "from a gunshot wound to the left temple." Jenkins said that neither he nor anyone else at the autopsy to the best of his knowledge had seen any such wound.

"I might have gone along with right temple," he said. I agree with that because just above the right ear there was some discoloration of the skull cavity with the tissue area being gray and there was some speculation that it might be lead.

"There might have been an entry wound there?"

"Yeah. And the opening and the way the bone was damaged behind the head would have definitely been a type of exit wound. The reason I have said this is I saw this before in other wounds and it was very striking.

"I have done hundreds of autopsies. I would like to talk to

the other people because I think that what I remember at Bethesda is true. I'd like to know who wrapped the head at Parkland and what kind of towels they were. I'd like to talk to the individuals who actually cleaned and wrapped the body for shipment."

Jenkins said he never understood why he was never contacted from the night of the autopsy by anyone until the Assassinations Committee investigating the case in 1977 got in touch with him. "I stood right there within three feet of the autopsy all night." But no-one was interested, and he has bad things to say about the Committee staff who did come to see him. They weren't interested in what he had to say.

He did not know Dennis David, who was not present during the autopsy. He remembers Jan Gail Rudnicki. Jim Metzler.

Jenkins said "I have a lot of questions. I'd like to get together with Boswell, Humes, and Finck. Humes made the comment that the brain 'fell out in my hand.' I know they didn't do a skull cap because all they did was extend the sagittal suture a little to get the remainder of the brain out. Actually, it was the middle suture in the top of the skull. They extended that a little bit. It doesn't make sense to me where they came up with a hole in the top of the head that was that close to the frontal bone.

"Indeed, there is a statement in David Lifton's book that there is a long laceration and incision in the corpus callosum down. I could have missed that but I don't remember those things. I remember seeing the brain and I remember the damage to it, but I don't remember major damage to the cerebellum. There was major damage to the brain, however. I remember an impression I have of the brain being very small." The weight of the brain given in the supplemental autopsy report is 1500 grams, which is the weight of a normal brain, far too much for a brain that has lost at least a quarter or a third of its matter.

He said that the autopsy log book disappeared. "We really never logged anyone in that night. Someone told us that he was coming. Someone had penciled in CNC up on the right-hand side of the log next to the autopsy number we would use.

"I remember a nice casket coming in. We were told that we had an Army or Air Force major for burial the next day, which is kind of unusual. We were told not to worry about logging him in, and that was extremely unusual.

Jenkins believed that the major came in a shipping casket. "In a body bag wrapped in sheets and towels. The coffin was there at the same time as Kennedy. They had apparently put him with Kennedy in that coffin. But all of that was done in the atrium there.

"Did Kennedy come in a shipping casket?" Jenkins said, yes, but he didn't see that happen. "He (Kennedy) was taken out of the casket in the atrium before we went into the morgue. As you came into the morgue there was a little room that had the cold

boxes. He was in that and logged and tagged with a toe tag there. But he was taken out of that and brought in on a gurney all wrapped in sheets. The body bag was already open.

"We put him on the table and we were told not to take the towels off his head. We did unwrap him and we did the body work.

Jenkins ended the conversation with saying "that it was a big lie perpetrated in our history. The really bad thing about it was why this was perpetrated. Did they cover it up for the reasons that LBJ gave, that the people couldn't handle it, or was it because of more sinister reasons? It has certainly changed my whole perception of the government.

"Sometime before my death I'd like to get to the bottom of it. I'd like to sit down with people who were witnesses. I'd like to read all of the books about it.

"I don't understand the conclusions and so forth of the Warren Commission. The things that came out of the autopsy were total fabrications. As naive as I was at that point in time, it was pretty shocking to me.

He said that the bullet could not have come out the throat and hit Connally because "the angle was wrong and it would have done massive damage in the trach area. There was no such damage. Boswell lifted that wide incision or butterfly area of the throat up and looked into there and felt it with his fingers. If there had been that type of damage there--we're talking about a cartilodal ring--it would have all been shattered." ✓

He is teaching at South West Texas University in its medical technology program, and working in a laboratory.

In fact, Dr. Humes testified that "... we examined carefully the bony structures in this vicinity as well as the X-rays , to see if there was nay evidence of fracture or of deposition of metallic fragments in the depths of this wound, and we saw no such evidence, that is no fractures of the bones of the shoulder girdle, or of the vertical column, and no metallic fragments were detectable by X-ray examination. (2 H 361)

We note that the X-rays that turned up before the Clark Panel several years later showed "several small metallic fragments present in this region." (Clark Panel Report p. 13.)

Since Humes was able to see quite clearly many small dust-like particles of metal in the head at the autopsy when they examined the X-rays being taken right then, here we have a clear cut case of a new, false X-ray being substituted for the neck to show a wound that had not been noted at the autopsy. It is unlikely that a military jacketed bullet would leave any dust-like particles at all, if it did not strike bone in the neck, which this one apparently could not have done.

"We received skull fragments and bullet fragments in a small bag."

I have conducted a series of lengthy interviews with Jim Jenkins since October of 1990. On April he came to the meeting in Dallas with some of the other autopsy witnesses and some of the Parkland witnesses, which we filmed.

On June 16, 1991, he responded to a long series of questions in the following interview.

"When did you hear that the President's body was coming?"

"Three o'clock sticks in my mind because that was about when the classes were canceled and we were told to report to the morgue."

Air Force 1 had not taken off yet. It was airborne at 3:47 EST. but, as many people in the Navy noted, "he was a Navy man. We knew he was coming to Bethesda."

I asked him about the other body that was received that afternoon, November 22, 1963. He had previously said that he was told it was the body of an Air Force major. "It came in earlier in the evening, after I arrived from classes. It came in about the time we first went to the morgue. I'm sure it was at least an hour before JFK came in. Maybe quite a bit more." Many years before he had told the same thing to Lifton.

Jenkins was not allowed to leave the room, except once when Captain Stover told him to eat his lunch. He was only gone a few moments. (March 25, 1991)

"Was the body in the casket?"

"Yes. It wasn't taken out of the casket and put in a cold box. It sat on a pop-up cart in the cold room, not in a cold box, and that's where it remained."

He said it had to be after 3:30, "when the other kid went off duty. I remember it coming in. It was Paul's and my job to log it in, but they wouldn't let us log it in."

Jim said that he did not actually see the body in the casket, as it was not opened. (May 24th, 1991)

Jim said that along with them was a First Class (E 6) hospital corpsman as the duty corpsman that night. "He was First Class and he was one of the few First Class in that position. He was an instructor in the School of Lab Sciences, and worked in special chemistry. He was in there the early part of that night. He was there when the major came in. He told me not to log the body in. Said he had been told not to log it in."

He said that the casket the air Force Major was in was a "nice casket," rosewood or red mahogany. It was not a cheap casket. It had brass fixtures." During another interview, he said it was mahogany, with ornate brass fixtures. It was a beaut." (May 24, 1991)

"There was really no-one in that room (the cold room) after the autopsy started. The double doors stayed open. A baby was

admitted to the morgue that night sometime."

"Was there a clock on the wall?"

"Military rooms don't go without clocks."

"He came in at least an hour before. Maybe more." but the casket of the alleged officer came in after they had started to prepare of the president's autopsy. "It was not there when we came on."

"It was not there when you came on?"

"No. When a body came into the morgue, we had to log it in, Paul and me."

"As soon as they told us classes were cancelled, I was never allowed to leave."

"And you think that was at 3:30?"

"I think so."

There is a conflict between Metzler's recollection that the casket came directly into the morgue, and Jenkins believing that the casket never came in, but went to the cold room adjoining the morgue and was unloaded there, the body being wheeled into the morgue.

He told me that four men helped set up the morgue: Paul O'Connor, Jim Metzler, himself, and the First Class, who was their boss.

After the body was received and removed from the coffin, they waited twenty minutes before the head was unwrapped.

Jenkins told David Lifton and myself that he had originally told me that the casket JFK came in was brown, but he only really remembers the casket JFK was buried in, which was black mahogany.

When the President's body came in, Jim did not help take it out of the casket. He saw it come in the morgue on the gurney wrapped in sheets. "It came out of the casket in the cold room. Paul was in the anti (cold) room." Jenkins says Paul did help take it out of the casket. Jenkins was in the morgue. (May 24, 1991). But Jenkins did not get a close look at the casket, as he was in the morgue.

"There were no shipping caskets around there." (May 24, 1991) With regard to this matter, Jenkins feels that Paul O'Connor, whom he is related to by marriage, thinks he saw this or that at this point in time, but he didn't actually see it. "Paul would have made the most dramatic statement in the very beginning, and Lifton jumped on it, and Lifton may have led him, or may have rearranged that in his own way and sent it back to Paul. That's the way Paul is. He jumps to conclusions." I'm not saying anything against Paul. I can't refute the fact that there was a shipping casket. I just didn't see one." (May 24, 1991)

He recalls logging in the President. There was no name with

the autopsy number, but he and Paul wrote C & C, which meant Commander in Chief."

"We did a full scale autopsy on JFK. We tested for everything. We examined the testes (they were sectioned) the adrenals, etc. His lungs were very pink. But the question came, does he smoke? It came back that he took an occasional cigar.

"There were sections of the heart and other organs taken."

He remembers a doctor whom he thinks was Grogan. He isn't sure, and that name is not yet known to us. "I remember a resident in Pathology. Real thin, curly hair, swarthy, brought something to Humes or Boswell that they had requested.

The brain stem was severed very smoothly. The brain was turned upside down and put into a gauze sling and he and Boswell infused it through two vessels--internal carotids, he thinks. "We put a needle in each one of the those that was attached to a piece of tubing that went to a 5 gallon container of formalin up on top of the cabinets. "We would normally let it sit there for 3-4 hours, then we'd drop it in the bucket which was filled with formalin."

"I remember Dr. Humes questioning whether or not the brain stem had been severed by a bullet, because the brain fell out in his hand. It was a smooth cut that looked like it had been severed with a knife or a scalpel--at the area of the axis (as it enters at the skull) which is at the first vertebra.

"Humes asked someone in the gallery if there had been any surgery at Parkland. From the discussion that I heard, from Humes asking someone in the gallery if there had been surgery to the head area, from the surgical cuts in the area of the wound, from the fact that the brain stem was severed, there had to be an extensive professional exam of the head area before it ever got to Bethesda. I'm sure that minimum incisions were made to get to the brain. They had to be minimum in order to keep it covered. They probably were very calculating in their cuts. It was a mess--blood, brains, skull. But it had to be obvious enough for Dr. Humes to question it. I'm thoroughly convinced."

"Prior to taking the brain out, just looking at the head, I think what prompted the comments in the FBI report was that there some surgical incisions at the area of the top of the skull near the wound."

He said that the skull was cut with a scalpel along a suture or scalpel line. Only one cut, but, "there may have been others.." In other words, much of this hinges on seeing what may have been only a one half to one inch cut.

"It (surgery) would had to have been done in order to remove the brain. If you were going to remove the brain, it would take a very small incision of less than an inch to take the brain out, but you would have had to cut the brain stem first."

"There is always a possibility that it could be a tear (the surgery to the brain stem), but I don't think so."

Later the spinal cord was removed--use of stryker saw cut both sides of the vertebral column. Jenkins saw Dr. Boswell remove the spinal cord.

"There had to be an examination of the body before it came to Bethesda, for the brain stem being severed. The description Humes had for (surgery) down to the corpus callosum. Those were surgical. They had to be done beforehand."

"Did someone get at the body?"

"Yes. they would have had to know what they were doing, have the time, and know where the bullet was.

"It would have had to be a concerted effort to accomplish something like this. I know that in my own mind that somewhere between Dallas and Bethesda somebody got at the body." (May 24, 1991)

"Suppose that the bullet that hit him in the throat came up that way and came out the back?"

"There would have had to be a hole in the base of the skull."

"And you would have noticed it?"

"Well, yeah, sure!"

"Suppose that it came out through the area that was later the large defect?"

"It still would have had to come up through the floor of the skull."

"I think the reason Humes and Boswell never said primarily what they thought was because they never were asked their opinion if there was a second possibility of a bullet from another angle."

With reference to the appearance of the body, Jim said "I wouldn't say that he was emaciated." The consensus, except for Paul O'Connor's caveat, was that Kennedy looked in the pink of health.

"I felt like he was a small man," Jenkins said. Contrast this with the unnamed doctor at Parkland Hospital who is quoted by Theodore Sorensen in Kennedy as saying "I had never seen the President before. He was a big man, bigger than I thought."

On May 9, 1991, I called Jim again. He reported to me that his cousin had examined a set of the autopsy photographs for us. His cousin Charles had two degrees in photography and was an expert on the subject. He reported that Charles had said that "there was definitely not an overlay of two negatives, but it could be an airbrushed negative. There was no matte line as Robert Groden had claimed.

"The most striking thing is the amount of the pictures which are out of focus. Almost intentionally out of focus."

We talked about the wounds again. "Like we said, there was still an area the size of a silver dollar hole left in the back underneath the scalp. In the later stages of the autopsy they were trying to fit the bone fragments together....there may have been some small fragments missing beneath the scalp...with the overlapping bone attached to the scalp. (This is not clear) certainly not in the area described.

Jenkins described the "midbrain being torn, the pons, the cerebellum. "There's no real path to that bullet."

"Was there any metal found at the autopsy?"

"No, not really. There were some metal fragments that were brought into the autopsy in a small vile. They weren't found in the head or torso at Bethesda."

"That was one of the reasons for the animosities or tensions going on between the gallery and the doctors. That was the reason why the radiologist came in because there was an insinuation that the guy who was taking the X-rays (Custer) didn't know what he was doing."

"I can't say with authority yes or no if there was a shipping casket. I'm also not sure if it was in a body bag and on a gurney. I don't really know. I can't answer those questions." I do have a memory of the body in sheets."

"I was very angry at Lifton and the manipulations that were made. I read part of his book when it came out--and its almost like a fantasy. This bizarre switch in caskets and so on is all well and interesting and exciting but here was no conclusion as to why. It was all assumption.

"I have no doubt but that the body was examined very thoroughly before it got to Bethesda. I don't know where. Probably we could..."

And then Jenkins, who has begun to investigate the case himself, asked if photographs of the autopsy room at Walter Reed were available. The men had insisted that some of the features seen in the photographs did not exist in the morgue at Bethesda.

"We had basically three wounds, two wounds with no exits--no metal fragments in the back wound (which went nowhere). The brain that we saw was not that damaged. It was damaged, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't damaged to the point where the cerebellum was totally severed and the mid brain was totally exposed and all of this stuff. The midbrain...all of these internal structures....the midbrain would have had to be dissected in order to make the statements that were made and to come up with a 1500 gram weight for that brain, would have been one of two things: Either it was a normal brain (intact) or it had been (undamaged?). Well, it had been intact."

A bullet can pass through the brain and what it actually does to brain tissue that is traumatised--it jells a little. There could have been some of that bone out the back of the brain.

"There was a brain. I saw a brain. I helped infuse the brain."

He said that the logical place for the pre-examination was on the plane. "There was security." (several of the men have suggested that it happened on a plane on the way to Washington.) "All of the people on the plane had strong emotional or political ties to Kennedy and it would be to their advantage not to say anything. That would break everything if one individual who was actually there would speak out."

"Both the Secret Service and the FBI had men who could probe for and remove bullets and they were both involved. I'm sure a lot of their forensics people who were not physicians could have done it. The type of examination we're talking about, to take out the bullet and so forth--it would take very special people, and they are refusing to talk. But it would take an X-ray, time, and special people to remove the bullet or fragments"

May 24, 1991

Jenkins discussed exploding bullets. Prussic acid explodes on contact. If used in exploding bullets, there would be fragments throughout the brain if there was an explosive bullet. "But the brain that I saw was virtually intact, and there were no fragments. The flap in the Zapruder film is much bigger than in the pics and at the autopsy."

The brain was basically intact. "probably a fourth of it was lost."

"The towels that were on the head were an off green--a lightish greenish." At this time we cannot determine for sure if there were towels on the head when it left Parkland. Aubrey Rike, who could feel the edges of the wound through the sheet when he placed the body in the casket, said no, there were no towels.

Jenkins said that he and Paul were told to go to the morgue at 3:30-4 p.m. Jenkins was not allowed to leave the morgue. "Paul was a kind of courier. He always had an escort, and was in and out of the morgue."

There was a dinner in Dallas the night I filmed these men with the Dallas witnesses, and there was a discussion about Lifton. "Al (Rike) was asking me about Lifton, he said that he didn't really have animosities towards him, but I feel betrayed back. But then I rationalized it out by saying, well, you know, he had a point he wanted to make regardless. That was the way it was handled, and I was discredited. Rike made the comment,

admitted to the morgue that night sometime."

"Was there a clock on the wall?"

"Military rooms don't go without clocks."

"He came in at least an hour before. Maybe more." but the casket of the alleged officer came in after they had started to prepare of the president's autopsy. "It was not there when we came on."

"It was not there when you came on?"

"No. When a body came into the morgue, we had to log it in, Paul and me."

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"We did a full scale autopsy on JFK. We tested for everything. We examined the testes (they were sectioned) the adrenals, etc. His lungs were very pink. But the question came, does he smoke? It came back that he took an occasional cigar.

"There were sections of the heart and other organs taken."

He remembers a doctor whom he thinks was Grogan. He isn't sure, and that name is not yet known to us. "I remember a resident in Pathology. Real thin, curly hair, swarthy, brought something to Humes or Boswell that they had requested.

The brain stem was severed very smoothly. The brain was turned upside down and put into a gauze sling and he and Boswell infused it through two vessels--internal carotids, he thinks. "We put a needle in each one of the those that was attached to a piece of tubing that went to a 5 gallon container of formalin up on top of the cabinets. "We would normally let it sit there for 3-4 hours, then we'd drop it in the bucket which was filled with formalin."

"I remember Dr. Humes questioning whether or not the brain stem had been severed by a bullet, because the brain fell out in his hand. It was a smooth cut that looked like it had been severed with a knife or a scalpel--at the area of the axis (as it enters at the skull) which is at the first vertebra.

"Humes asked someone in the gallery if there had been any surgery at Parkland. From the discussion that I heard, from Humes asking someone in the gallery if there had been surgery to the head area, from the surgical cuts in the area of the wound, from the fact that the brain stem was severed, there had to be an extensive professional exam of the head area before it ever got to Bethesda. I'm sure that minimum incisions were made to get to the brain. They had to be minimum in order to keep it covered. They probably were very calculating in their cuts. It was a mess--blood, brains, skull. But it had to be obvious enough for Dr. Humes to question it. I'm thoroughly convinced."

"Prior to taking the brain out, just looking at the head, I think what prompted the comments in the FBI report was that there some surgical incisions at the area of the top of the skull near the wound."

He said that the skull was cut with a scalpel along a suture or scalpel line. Only one cut, but, "there may have been others.." In other words, much of this hinges on seeing what may have been only a one half to one inch cut.

"It (surgery) would had to have been done in order to remove the brain. If you were going to remove the brain, it would take a very small incision of less than an inch to take the brain out, but you would have had to cut the brain stem first."

"There is always a possibility that it could be a tear (the surgery to the brain stem), but I don't think so."

Later the spinal cord was removed--use of stryker saw cut both sides of the vertebral column. Jenkins saw Dr. Boswell remove the spinal cord.

"There had to be an examination of the body before it came to Bethesda, for the brain stem being severed. The description Humes had for (surgery) down to the corpus callosum. Those were surgical. They had to be done beforehand."

"Did someone get at the body?"

"Yes. they would have had to know what they were doing, have the time, and know where the bullet was.

"It would have had to be a concerted effort to accomplish something like this. I know that in my own mind that somewhere between Dallas and Bethesda somebody got at the body." (May 24, 1991)

"Suppose that the bullet that hit him in the throat came up that way and came out the back?"

"There would have had to be a hole in the base of the skull."

"And you would have noticed it?"

"Well, yeah, sure!"

"Suppose that it came out through the area that was later the large defect?"

"It still would have had to come up through the floor of the skull."

"I think the reason Humes and Boswell never said primarily what they thought was because they never were asked their opinion if there was a second possibility of a bullet from another angle."

With reference to the appearance of the body, Jim said "I wouldn't say that he was emaciated." The consensus, except for Paul O'Connor's caveat, was that Kennedy looked in the pink of health.

"I felt like he was a small man," Jenkins said. Contrast this with the unnamed doctor at Parkland Hospital who is quoted by Theodore Sorensen in Kennedy as saying "I had never seen the President before. He was a big man, bigger than I thought."

On May 9, 1991, I called Jim again. He reported to me that his cousin had examined a set of the autopsy photographs for us. His cousin Charles had two degrees in photography and was an expert on the subject. He reported that Charles had said that "there was definitely not an overlay of two negatives, but it could be an airbrushed negative. There was no matte line as Robert Groden had claimed.

"The most striking thing is the amount of the pictures which are out of focus. Almost intentionally out of focus."

We talked about the wounds again. "Like we said, there was still an area the size of a silver dollar hole left in the back underneath the scalp. In the later stages of the autopsy they were trying to fit the bone fragments together....there may have been some small fragments missing beneath the scalp...with the overlapping bone attached to the scalp. (This is not clear) certainly not in the area described.

Jenkins described the "midbrain being torn, the pons, the cerebellum. "There's no real path to that bullet."

"Was there any metal found at the autopsy?"

"No, not really. There were some metal fragments that were brought into the autopsy in a small vile. They weren't found in the head or torso at Bethesda."

"That was one of the reasons for the animosities or tensions going on between the gallery and the doctors. That was the reason why the radiologist came in because there was an insinuation that the guy who was taking the X-rays (Custer) didn't know what he was doing."

"I can't say with authority yes or no if there was a shipping casket. I'm also not sure if it was in a body bag and on a gurney. I don't really know. I can't answer those questions." I do have a memory of the body in sheets."

"I was very angry at Lifton and the manipulations that were made. I read part of his book when it came out--and its almost like a fantasy. This bizarre switch in caskets and so on is all well and interesting and exciting but here was no conclusion as to why. It was all assumption.

"I have no doubt but that the body was examined very thoroughly before it got to Bethesda. I don't know where. Probably we could..."

And then Jenkins, who has begun to investigate the case himself, asked if photographs of the autopsy room at Walter Reed were available. The men had insisted that some of the features seen in the photographs did not exist in the morgue at Bethesda.

"We had basically three wounds, two wounds with no exits--no metal fragments in the back wound (which went nowhere). The brain that we saw was not that damaged. It was damaged, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't damaged to the point where the cerebellum was totally severed and the mid brain was totally exposed and all of this stuff. The midbrain...all of these internal structures....the midbrain would have had to be dissected in order to make the statements that were made and to come up with a 1500 gram weight for that brain, would have been one of two things: Either it was a normal brain (intact) or it had been (undamaged?). Well, it had been intact."

A bullet can pass through the brain and what it actually does to brain tissue that is traumatised--it jells a little. There could have been some of that bone out the back of the brain.

"There was a brain. I saw a brain. I helped infuse the brain."

He said that the logical place for the pre-examination was on the plane. "There was security." (several of the men have suggested that it happened on a plane on the way to Washington.) "All of the people on the plane had strong emotional or political ties to Kennedy and it would be to their advantage not to say anything. That would break everything if one individual who was actually there would speak out."

"Both the Secret Service and the FBI had men who could probe for and remove bullets and they were both involved. I'm sure a lot of their forensics people who were not physicians could have done it. The type of examination we're talking about, to take out the bullet and so forth--it would take very special people, and they are refusing to talk. But it would take an X-ray, time, and special people to remove the bullet or fragments"

May 24, 1991

Jenkins discussed exploding bullets. Prussic acid explodes on contact. If used in exploding bullets, there would be fragments throughout the brain if there was an explosive bullet. "But the brain that I saw was virtually intact, and there were no fragments. The flap in the Zapruder film is much bigger than in the pics and at the autopsy."

The brain was basically intact. "probably a fourth of it was lost."

"The towels that were on the head were an off green--a lightish greenish." At this time we cannot determine for sure if there were towels on the head when it left Parkland. Aubrey Rike, who could feel the edges of the wound through the sheet when he placed the body in the casket, said no, there were no towels.

Jenkins said that he and Paul were told to go to the morgue at 3:30-4 p.m. Jenkins was not allowed to leave the morgue. "Paul was a kind of courier. He always had an escort, and was in and out of the morgue."

There was a dinner in Dallas the night I filmed these men with the Dallas witnesses, and there was a discussion about Lifton. "Al (Rike) was asking me about Lifton, he said that he didn't really have animosities towards him, but I feel betrayed back. But then I rationalized it out by saying, well, you know, he had a point he wanted to make regardless. That was the way it was handled, and I was discredited. Rike made the comment,

'well, you know, Lifton has been pretty good to me and Paul.' I didn't make a comment."

Lifton paid to take Paul and his wife Sandy to London. He's been to California two or three times to be filmed for shows on the case. (May 24, 1991)

"There was a fight in the gallery, or a pushing match. One of the reasons why was that there was someone taking pictures." (April 28, 1991)

He pointed out in one of the photographs of the body the rubber block that was used under the neck to raise the head and keep it in place.

Jenkins was reading the Warren Report, which I sent him. "It is almost as though they are talking about two different autopsies.." (April 28, 1991)

He said the instrument table would not be over the body until the Y incision was made. "There would have been a scale next to it." (April 30, 1991) the pictures show an instrument table on four short legs sitting astride the body. The one the men describe as actually having been in use stood on tall legs on the floor and the table swung out over the body. "It was a cutting board, really. They put the organs on them and cut them." ""The one we had at Bethesda had a scale attached."

He recalled taking all the sheets off the body. The phone on the wall was in the wrong place, not on the wall as it is in the pictures behind the right side of the head. We see it on the tile wall just above the head, looking at the left side of the face.

The phone was not for dictating.

He said there should have been a portable X-ray machine in the pictures somewhere, and the wooden structure seen in the pictures on the floor did not exist in the autopsy room. He said that the tile step we see on the floor in the pictures would be the beginning of the gallery. But the Bethesda gallery had a rail. The step and beginning of the gallery should be about four feet from the table.

Speaking again about being stopped from logging the body of the Air Force officer in, he said, "It was highly irregular. The military was real emphatic about that. Everybody had to be logged in. I mean, you got a body, it had to be tagged immediately. It had to be logged. They didn't ever. They said don't worry about logging him in."

"Did you see the body in that casket?"

"No, I did not."

"I can definitely tell you that there was an ornate type casket already in the laboratory when the President came in."

"How about the bronze casket?"

"That type, whatever it was. It was already there." He was in the morgue and "the doors were open and I could see them come

into the cold room." (May 29, 1991) He saw the ornate casket and asked about it. He was told it was the Air Force major. "Do we need to log him into the morgue log?"

"No," he was told. They said it was too late to take him to Arlington that afternoon. They'd take him over in the morning."

On David Lifton, he had a final comment. "His statement to others that I'm not reliable, that I'm all broken up about this--to me, that's kind of slippery." (March 26, 1991)

On May 29, 1991, Jenkins said, "I am willing to say that when the body had arrived at Bethesda, the brain stem was cut with a knife before it got there. There were enough surgical cuts in the head and scalp area to indicate the brain had been removed and thoroughly examined. There was surgery down in there. They only needed to extend the sagittal sutures a bit to get it out.

"There was another doctor that came into the morgue to help do that. He had real curly hair and a dark swarthy complexion. He was stopped at that point. Average height. I can't remember his name."

Jenkins did not recall Floyd Riebe, the medical photographer, coming in until after the autopsy started, which means that Floyd, if this is accurate, did not see the shipping casket.

Jenkins knows the brain was severed before it arrived at the autopsy because when they removed it from the head, the spinal cord did come with it. Sometimes the cord breaks up, but generally a lot of it will come out with the brain, and usually all. This did not happen at the President's autopsy. The cord had to be taken out separately, which is quite an extensive procedure.

"Humes said at the autopsy, 'it fell out in my hand!' referring to the brain, so at first I thought a bullet had severed it.

"When we were having trouble infusing the brain because the blood vessels at the base of the brain were retracted, we were having a hard time getting the needle in." It was then that Jenkins had time to study the brain, and he felt sure that it had been operated on, and had been removed from the head previously.

Unless what Humes says to the Warren Commission about the condition of the brain can be interpreted as surgery, Jenkins is almost alone in describing surgery to the head. But he has one powerful ally. One major piece of evidence that corroborates him.

The FBI.