

31, he wrote a nonresponse, that they "affirm our previous attitude to you that the memorandum is not the property of the United States and belongs to the Kennedy family."

Even their numerous and vocal enemies never accused the Kennedy family of claiming ownership of government files. Rhoads made no reference to the government's copy.

In rejecting my request for other factual, public information about the film and its history so that the conflicts in the public accountings might, if possible, be reconciled, this keeper of the national heritage refused absolutely, saying that what was in the public review (the cause of most of the conflict) and the GSA-family copy (the original of it) is all anyone in this land of freedom will be permitted to have. His reason, since he could find none in the law.

To furnish such information might tend to encourage the morbid curiosity concerning the autopsy materials which the terms of the letter agreement were partly intended to prevent.

Aside from the fact that this is false and but another effort to make the Kennedys seem responsible for the suppression, which he had the collaboration of their lawyer, Marshall, and covered above the fact that the contract provides quite the contrary, as I was later able to force the Archives and General Services Administration to admit in federal court, can it be that an accurate accounting of the number of film would cause "morbid curiosity" where all the contradictory accounts do not, that suppression does not cause "morbid curiosity".

November 4 I reminded Rhoads that after all those months he had responded to the wrong thing, not an accident, that I had asked for a copy of the government's copy, not for a copy of the Kennedy copy. He never answered this or subsequent letters until August 19, 1970, more than a year and a half after the initial request.

By that time I had used other approaches.

Over the years, and especially after the effective date of the Freedom of Information law, I kept after Rowley for information to prove the Secret Service had that was not in the Archives. (Kelley later joked that he had been told that if he wanted to know what was in the Archives to ask me. I assured him it was, as it is, an organization.) Time after time Secret Service responses were inaccurate and, unfortunately, sometimes deceptive. They made so many blunders, all of which could be very embarrassing to the Secret Service if used in a wrong context, that finally, under date of February 24, 1970, Kelley invited me to a conference in his office the morning of Wednesday, March 4, "with a list of the material which you claim is being withheld from you". They would then "discuss with you what our file reflects was the disposition of the material which came into our possession."

At that meeting, Kelley was joined by the Secret Service's agent in charge of public relations and their general counsel.

In fairness to the Secret Service, the reader should bear in mind that it was immediately cast by the FBI into a relatively minor role in the investigation despite the FBI's lack of jurisdiction, and then by the Commission, which became so dependent on the FBI it became the Bureau's creature. The Secret Service was in the position of having been told by the FBI what the official line on the assassination was and having to hew that line. Its own early reporting, despite its many deficiencies and despite the bureaucratic falling into position on the framing of the evidence, history and Oswald, was entirely consistent with the official explanation as I set forth in some detail throughout WHITEWASH II.

By and large, it was a friendly meeting at which, for the most part, the Secret Service was honest and forthright, admitting some of its errors, showing (and later providing) copies of what it had been having and discussing the background of some of the events and materials. From my notes as they relate to what is here relevant, this included

the original autopsy authorization, of which there is no Archives copy is authentic and needlessly unclear. The original of the CD 371 receipt items were shown me, including the receipts. There is no doubt of the authenticity of the copy.

It was on this occasion that Kelley first told me that it is the X-rays, not the pictures, to certain members of the Secret Service staff. Although he did not know the exact date, he is certain before the autopsy doctors testified and as a preparatory taking of that testimony. The Secret Service also provided the X-rays - all those the Secret Service had - were

among the things they never had is any of the tissue slides, that made of a piece removed from the edge of the rear nonfatal examination that could establish through the nature of the tissue (as burning) whether that was an entrance wound

Robert Kennedy's position in the withholding of the evidence was more explicit and unequivocal than Specter's representation. Robert was never consulted until after the taking of the autopsy and he did not then refuse the Commission and could not have done so if necessary. Kelley's account to me on the taking of the film also establishes this as it relates to that film. It was kept in a doubly-locked Secret Service safe to which only a few people had the combination.

Although the Appendix B listing shows prints made of the X-rays, the Secret Service did not make any copies of them. All the film was

Incredibly, the limousine was washed in Dallas, Kelley believed under the supervision of agents. He was unaware of a picture I had showing no agent at the car when it was still at the hospital.

We spent much time discussing this memorandum of transfer. Although it was all in Robert's name, delivery was made to and receipt signed by Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, formerly the President's secretary, who was at the Archives in the interest of the Kennedy Library. Our discussion sometimes got fairly pointed. I made it clear that I prepared not to sue but was also prepared to do so if necessary. They nodded assent when I said that under the law the references to the uses already made of it nullified any right to withhold that have been claimed under the law. On the other hand, I offered them by their judgment as to whether there is anything in it subject to scandalous use. If they assured me this was true, I would be satisfied with a copy in which any such material was masked out in copying as it reflected what was transferred in a meaningful way. An alternative, if they preferred it, I would accept a typed list if they would show me their original copy, which would enable confirmation of the accuracy of the retyped list.

(Except for illegalities, what would be scandalous in a receipt for the transfer of property?)

They did not hide that they had been in constant touch with the FBI, which was just as good, because I had already learned of A's requests for Secret Service letters to be rewritten to make them congenial to what the Archives preferred to have recorded in it. It was an arcane concept of detached scholarship.

It was apparent to me that there was no Secret Service desire to withhold this and a considerable volume of other material that had been withheld, although even then, at this late date, they claimed not to know what they actually did and later produced. I believe this conference and what was perhaps the first full disclosure of unofficial information, their nature and the public purposes they could serve, may be available in the relatively high percentage of Secret Service material available in the regular 1970 review later that year.

It was well into lunchtime when the meeting ended. I had given

Post Mortem (1969)
(H. Wassberg, Publisher)

Need for date of
the meeting

JFK ASSASSINATION
Cover-up Smashed!