

Autopsy Projects: The Best Evidence

I am assigning for everyone chapters 7,8, and 9 from "Breach of Trust" as general background reading for the autopsy projects. You will all share the same level of introductory information.

Topics:

Why Bethesda Hospital? Was it really equipped to handle the most important autopsy of the American century?

Source: For choice of Bethesda Hosp for the autopsy rather than Walter Reed. Use Max Holland , "The Kennedy Assassination Tapes," read pages 28-32.

Were the prosectors or doctors selected to do the autopsy really qualified?

Suggestion: You might want to Google (or some other search engine) the names of the autopsists---Humes, Boswell, and Finck to get a better insight into this aspect of the project.

How long did the autopsy take? (2 hrs). How long should it have taken?

Source: Michael Baden, "Confessions of a Medical Examiner," pp. 5-22

Question: state of the equipment at Bethesda. X-Ray machine, etc. . .

Point here is that all 3 prosectors are military and subjected to military orders. How does that show up: failure to dissect JFK's back wound. Failure to examine his clothes (see Finck). Military meddling!!!!

Failure to dissect back wound. Why is that important? See Finck's testimony at Garrison's Clay Shaw trial. (Will need the trial transcripts for this)

Have student check the official autopsy protocol on p. 541 WCR and note how the Report describes JFK's two wounds under point 2. What is the language used? How do you respond to this?

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Possible to add to this project. Scanning of the national press (leave it for the New York Times, for a period of just last part of November until December 10th for any comment or question raising about why Bethesda. Why a military autopsy?

Missing Autopsy evidence

Main source: Doug Horne.

His essay “Two Caskets: Two Autopsies, Two Brain Exams: Disappearing Evidence.”

Fred Graham piece in *New York Times*, 8/27/1972 pp. 1 & 57 citing Cyril Wecht on the topic.

See also George Lardner, *Washington Post* 11/10/1998, p. A3 for piece on JFK’s missing brain.

Need to do a Google search or w/ another search engine to get as complete a biography for Doug Horne. What are his credentials? Why, if at all, should what he has to say be taken into account even if you have some reservations. You decide his one way or the other as to the strength of his argument.

Other source: Cyril Wecht with Mark Curriden & Angela Powell, “Tales From the Morgue: Forensic Answers to Nine Famous Cases,” Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY, 2005 Does Hood have a copy. I think there is one in Weisberg Archive on 4th floor of Library.

See Wecht’s statements about critical missing autopsy evidence.

Note: Possibility of having a separate report on Wecht alone. Sources would be His Tales From the Morgue. Add here that student do a Google search on Wecht. Get contemporary stuff on the Bush Ad. Campaign effort to ruin him.
