

Mr. James J. Rowley
Director
United States Secret Service
The Department of the Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Chief Rowley,

On July 6, 1972, I wrote to you to inquire about the destruction of films taken at the autopsy of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, at Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

During an examination of these autopsy photographs and x-rays on January 7, 1972, Dr. John K. Lattimer of Columbia University noted that one "roll of '120' film (which) had been spoiled by unrolling it in the light and a notation that this had been done deliberately by one of the agents present." (Resident and Staff Physician, May 1972, pp. 45, 47.)

I received a reply from your office dated July 21, 1972, from John W. Warner, Jr., which stated that "no film or other items related to this incident was destroyed by any member of the Secret Service."

On February 5, 1973, I received a copy of a report from the National Archives entitled:

Report of Inspection by Naval Medical Staff
on November 1, 1966 at National Archives
of X-Rays and Photographs of Autopsy of
President John F. Kennedy.

Page 11 of this report states:

(4) One roll of 120 film (processed but showing no recognizable image) which we recall was seized by Secret Service agents from a Navy medical corpsman whose name is not known to us during the autopsy and immediately exposed to the light.

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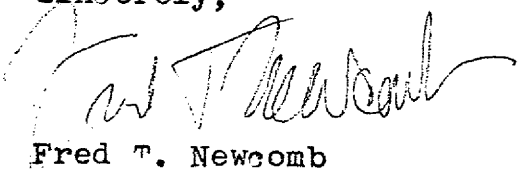
In light of this report and the reply by Mr. Warner from your office to my letter of July 6, 1972, it would seem that a serious conflict has occurred in this matter.

I cannot imagine a circumstance, in an autopsy of this importance, where it would become necessary to destroy films, since, in some cases, blank, unexposed film on hand at this autopsy was saved and catalogued.

In this regard, I have reason to believe that a request to destroy film at this autopsy would not have come from the family of the late President.

May I hear from you at your earliest convenience regarding this apparent conflict of the record.

Sincerely,



Fred T. Newcomb

FTN:mkn
Enclosures (2)

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February 6, 1973