

Gary L. Aguilar, M.D. and J. Thornton Boswell, M.D.

Date: Spring, 1994

Time: 4:30 PM

Telephone conversation regarding the autopsy of JFK

SIDE ONE

GA: On face sheet -- was 17 cm. defect to reflect the size of the wound before placing fragment of bone that arrived late into the autopsy into the OCCIPITAL wound and the 13 cm. to reflect the size of the wound after the fragment was in place?

JB: "Right."

GA: Was there one large defect in the head from fore to aft, or was there two?

JB: "Just one defect."

GA: Does the Rydberg diagram (CE-388) show the bone fragment back in place?

JB: "Yeah, the eh -- that fragment -- the defect -- the wound of entrance was at the base of that defect and, eh, the shelving on the inner surface of the bone was half on the intact portion of the skull and half on that fragment that we received from Dallas and replaced."

GA: Did anyone ever tell you where that fragment came from? From the street? The limo? Parkland?

JB: "I think it was from the street."

"I'm almost sure it was from the street, because somebody picked it up and gave it to one of the Secret Service men, and he in turn brought it to us."

GA: The diagram (CE-388) showed the bone back in place?

JB: "Right."

GA: Could cerebellum have been seen there? Kemp Clark said you could see cerebellum.

JB: "Well he was wrong...no, you couldn't see cerebellum."
"The right side of the cerebellum -- or eh, the right side of the cerebrum was so fragmented -- I think what he saw and misinterpreted as cerebellum was that."

GA: Brain weight, 1500 grams. Humes said in JAMA that 2/3 of the right cerebrum had been blown away...did you weigh the brain that night?

JB: "I suspect that -- I don't have any direct memory of that now. But I recall the general events and I'm almost sure that our practice at that time was that the brain -- it, eh -- we couldn't infuse it with formalin like we would a normal brain, like we would at a normal autopsy -- and I think we just -- eh -- put it in a piece of gauze and dropped it in a bucket of formalin. And then we came down the Monday following and -- eh -- then we measured, weighed and so forth, so I suspect that weight was probably the formalin fixed brain."

GA: So you did that just two days after the death, it wasn't two weeks later?

JB: "Oh no, no, no. Normally we would fix a brain and then have a brain cutting at a subsequent time with our neuropathologist from the AFIP. Dick Davis used to come over and cut brains for us. And, eh, we would have, that would have been the practice, however, in this situation I know that that brain was reasonably well fixed -- as well as it was going to be fixed. And we went down on Monday -- I sort of think it was Monday as I remember -- but within a couple of three days. And, eh -- we weighed and measured and so forth and at that time we decided that the brain was badly enough damaged that we could do most of our examination without cutting it. And we thought that the brain might have some historical value later -- by not cutting it -- and so, we did what examination we decided to

do at that point, and then we wrapped it up and forwarded with the slides -- by this time the blocks had been cut, slides prepared and so forth -- and we forwarded all that -- eh -- material downtown along with our reports and so forth. And unfortunately, the brain never showed up again."

GA: Finck testified that he order taken photos of the interior and external aspects of the occipital wound with the scalp reflected in an attempt to display to the entrance wound on the skull ON THE BONE. Do you recall if he took those films, or if he directed that they be taken?

JB: "No, ah, we had -- we had -- good photographs that showed the -- eh -- both the scalp and skull wounds -- em -- I, ah, you know, I-I think some of that testimony that Jim gave in the hearings -- which were sever- several years later -- and then without any records and were not very knowledgeable questioners, I think some of that testimony might be suspect. And Jim and I have met frequently -- we've remained very close friends -- and -- and we met, as you know, just a little over a year ago and talked to the people with the AMA. And eh --

GA: Were you accurately quoted in JAMA?

JB: "Oh, yea, I tell you, we studied that article very well. I -- eh -- and those were accurate."

GA: Posner said at the Conyers Committee that that both you guys were now placing the entry wound to the head way up high in the parietal bone, not down low.

JB: "Well, I tell you -- eh -- what Jim and I agreed in that conference with the AMA people was that -- eh -- all of the measurements and all of the information in the report were the most valid. And that anything that might have been said subsequent to that had to be taken with a grain of salt. Because a lot of those people down in the Congressional inquiry, and so forth, they were not knowledgeable people, and they made comments and so forth, and questions and statements -- some of them I think Jim may have agreed with that I don't think were legitimate."

JB: "And see, eh, Jim went there -- we never have had any records except, eh, the reports from the Warren Commission and a lot of things like that. A lot of our records now are things that were published in books many years later by people that came up with trash and crap. So Jim and I sat down a couple of years ago and agreed that the most valid statements are our original report, because we labored over that long and hard. You know the autopsy went several hours, we stayed there a long time and -- refreshed our notes and so forth. And then got together for two days later after that and wrote the report and all the figures and the data there is the most legitimate. And I would refer anybody back to that -- and swear by it."

GA: Posner said he interviewed you and said that you'd changed your mind and you weren't agreeing with what the autopsy report said, that you now placed the wound high in the back of the head.

JB: "No, no, no, no, no. That -- that's -- that's -- first of all, I never talked to him. Jim talked to him. And, eh, I've read his book and much of it I agree with. But there are a few things that -- that are unquestionably wrong. I haven't tried to correct it or anything. But, eh --"

GA: Somebody sent me a copy of Posner's testimony before the Conyer's Committee and he said that he'd talked to both you and Jim and said that both of you had changed your mind.

JB: "No, that's not true. I never talked to Posner. He called me and I was out and we never got back together. Jim -- they did talk over the phone -- and that's a terrible way to discuss, eh, matters like this. Eh, where you want to be precise and so forth."

GA: Did you take photographs before the brain was taken out?

JB: "Oh, yes, yeah. We -- well, first of all we photographed the whole body initially. Yeah, and I'm sure that -- eh -- that there were skull photographs. And then I remember -- see the scalp was eh, there was a defect beneath the scalp,

there was not a defect in the scalp, because you could pull the scalp up and eh, it was completely intact except for the lacerations where the bone had exploded and come out through the scalp. But, eh, I -- one of those photographs shows me holding the scalp up firm over the defect. And in that, there's a little piece of mucous, or something, which an awful lot of people have interpreted as the wound of entrance. That was not the wound of entrance."

GA: Was there a significant defect in the scalp around the wound of entrance in the head?

JB: "Its described very well in the -- eh -- autopsy report. It was a beveling type of wound -- the bullet had entered at an angle and there was a little elongated ovioid defect. Eh, coming from below up -- 'cause his head was bent way forward, you know, when that struck him. And so there was a beveling wound there and it -- its very difficult to demonstrate in the photographs."

GA: But you remember taking some photographs of that skull defect before taking the brain out?

JB: "Right."
{ Gary-note that Finck told Blumberg that he arrived AFTER the brain and other organs had been removed. If he directed that this picture be taken then either it was without the brain in the cranium or he lied about his late arrival -- OR Boswell is misremembering. }

GA: Who took the brain out?

JB: "I'm not sure. I'm-- at this point I can't remember exactly. I remember I was doing the writing and Jim was doing the measuring and so forth. And then when we got to the head I measured and -- eh -- and did the writing and Jim moved down -- I think he was helping with -- we were taking additional X-rays of the body. We were looking for bullets. We couldn't find the bullets, you know."

GA: Do you recall having seen a real large round fragment of metal, 6.5 mm in diameter with a small chip out of it up high where the HSCA Medical Panel placed the entry wound to the head? (On the skull films)

JB: "There were not any appreciably large fragments. They were -- eh -- they were very small fragments actually, and -- eh --"

GA: Have you seen this large fragment on copies of the X-rays that have appeared in various books?

JB: "Well, eh, it was not very large. On X-rays, as you well know, eh, fragments of metal can look -- eh -- a lot bigger and so forth, and I can assure you there were no very sizable fragments, and -- eh -- they were taken out and put on a watch glass and they were all very small."

GA: Where was the largest fragment in the skull?

JB: "As I remember, the largest piece was up along the -- eh -- frontal sinus, right."

GA: (Referring to the CBS Memo submitted to the Conyers Committee by Roger Feinman) Snyder said that an X-ray was taken with a photo in the back -- do you remember if an X-ray or photograph was taken with a probe in the back?

JB: "No. Jim Snyder is a very dear friend of mine. And, eh -- I don't remember. I know when he -- I don't remember anything like that -- I remember when he objected to some of the films that were shown on CBS -- because they really screwed things up too. But -- eh -- I don't remember Jim saying anything like that."

GA: Ebersole said that the wound to the back was to the right of T-4 and Burkley said that the wound to the back was to the right of T-3, do YOU remember what vertebral body it was next to?

JB: "No. Its -- it was -- I think it was higher than that, though. I think it would probably be opposite maybe a cervical vertebra."

"I don't know how they would have made that determination [that the back wound was so low], because -- eh -- I'm trying to think if any X-rays would have shown that. See one of the cervical vertebrae, the transverse process was nicked off by that bullet. And -- eh -- I'm sure that would have had to have been a lower cervical vertebra, because although the position was such that -- it was rising in the body -- the bullet wound."

GA: "The bullet wound, you mean?"

JB: "Yeah, and it exited his thyroid cartilage. But, eh -- I-I think the entrance wound would have had to have been -- eh -- opposite a cervical -- a low cervical vertebra. At most it might have been as low as T-1 or something like that. But, eh, it certainly it was not T-4."

GA: Do you remember how many skull films you took, because Ebersole told Mantik that they took 5 or 6 because they kept looking for fragments.

JB: "I don't remember that many, but it-its very possible, it could have been. Em -- you're right, we were taking X-rays just like mad, trying to find an intact bullet someplace."

GA: [Reads CBS memo to JB -- parts about metal probe and X-rays taken after Sibert and O'Neill left and that Sibert and O'Neill were never in the morgue, only in the ante-room]

JB: "Well, I don't -- I don't believe that. I-I remember us probing that wound, but I don't remember an X-ray being taken. And I'm sure -- almost sure -- that one was not taken."

GA: Sometimes when a physician relates something to a non-physician and then that non-physician passes it on to other non-physicians, things get very confused.

JB: "There's something out of context or something, because that didn't happen."

"Well, what happened was that -- eh -- and this has caused -- and in fact -- the Secret Service and FBI people were never taken out -- were never out of the, eh, morgue. They stayed there the entire time and the telephone was right by my shoulder and those guys stayed on the telephone all the time. And they were causing an awful lot of distraction. But anyway, eh, what happened was that -- eh -- we probed that wound and considered opening it actually to -- eh --

eh, demonstrate the entire length of it and so forth. And then, when we got into the chest and into the neck, we found the entire tract, it was external to the pleura. It did not go into the -- the chest cavity. But it was right at the apex of the chest cavity, and right along it, and it went from superior to inferior, back to front. And, eh, by the time that we had demonstrated, eh, at the end of the autopsy, eh, we felt it was not necessary to open the tract up, or to probe further or that sort of thing. We were perfectly well satisfied about the course of that wound."

GA: Did Humes speak to anybody in Dallas on the phone that night?

JB: "Not that night -- early the next morning."

GA: On the face sheet all the markings but one -- 14 cms -- is in pencil. That one marking is in blue ink. You don't happen to recall if that was written at the end of the autopsy?

JB: "No, every mark on there was made in the morgue."

GA: The face sheet said that the liver weighed 650 grams, I told someone that they probably meant to write 1650 grams and that the "1" was dropped somehow. [Gary -- No you Ditz! I told YOU that the "1" may have been dropped!! <G>]

JB: "Well, eh, the "1" was probably obscured by a water-mark or something. Having been in college as long as I was I would never write down a 600 gram liver."

GA: Was Rydberg, the medical illustrator who did the drawings for the Warren Commission, present in the morgue during the autopsy?

JB: "No, no. No, he was not there. We -- Jim and I, eh -- I guess gave him measurements and so forth, and, em, showed him what to draw, how to draw and so forth. And then, eh, had him do it over and over and so forth, and then finally approved of his final -- that's as good as a demonstration

as we could get. We did not have the photographs to show the Warren Commission, and those drawings were specifically to demonstrate that -- the findings for them."

GA: Both Humes and Finck testified that the conclusion of the autopsy report report that "shots fired from above and behind" was only true within 45 degrees. Is this accurate to your recollection?

JB: BOSWELL'S RESPONSE WAS CUT OFF BY THE END OF THE TAPE!

SIDE TWO

[Note that part of the dialogue is missing! NOT on the tape!]

JB: "This guy that wrote CONSPIRACY one and two -- I don't know how he got those photos, those were long before they were permitted out of the Archives. How they got pictures of those -- or how they were able to reproduce 'em -- and some of them are obviously fakes."

GA: "Some of the autopsy photographs are obviously fakes?"

JB: "No, the pictures in his book."

GA: "Oh. Oh, OK."

JB: "So somebody obviously sold him a bill of goods, like some of the X-rays and so forth."

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Transcript of telephone conversation between
Gary L. Aguilar, M.D. and James Joesph Humes, M.D.
April 30, 1994 6:00 PM Pacific time

GA: [Tells Humes about Posner's testimony to the Conyer's Committee and the fact that he states Humes and Boswell have once again returned the location of the entrance wound of the head to the "cowlick" area.]

JH: "What's the purpose of your phone call, Doctor?"

GA: [Explains that he wants to satisfy in his own mind the correct location of this wound.]

JH: "Now we measured where the wound was -- we took photographs of where the wound was -- and I really don't want to talk to you or anybody else about it anymore. Period."

GA: "Well, I'm sorry. You'll see from the stuff that gee I hope that Jay will forward to you--"

JH: "Well I hope he doesn't. You know, I'm really not interested in getting into a debate with you or anybody else."

GA: "Well I'm not asking debate, I'm just asking to--"

JH: "Well, you sound debatable. [No you don't, Gary!] Doctor, I really don't want to discuss this with you -- period."

GA: "Well, I'm sorry for having bothered you."

JH: "Well the world bothers me, and I'm fed up with it. I'm being perfectly candid with you."

GA: "I-I understand. I-I, it certainly was not my intention, my only -- my only intention was to try to know whether you'd agreed with doctor --"

JH: "What difference does it make at this juncture what we said to anybody else what we did or didn't say -- period. You know? Where are you coming from?"

GA: "Well, the only place I'm coming from is that I have thought that the statements you made to the Journal of the American Medical Association were reliable about where you said the head wound was."

JH: "I would guess they're reliable, yes, sir."

GA: "And, but, but Mr. Posner in Congressional testimony said that he spoke to you in the last year or so and you changed your mind."

JH: "I don't know what you're talking about -- I don't want to discuss it further -- I'm busy right now, and please don't bother me again."

GA: "Well, I'm sorry to have called."

JH: "That's OK."
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