

April 27, 1975

Dr. James B. Rhoads  
National Archives and Records Service  
General Services Administration  
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Dr. Rhoads:

It has been nationally reported that a team of physicians has recently studied the John F. Kennedy autopsy material at the Archives at the request of the Rockefeller Commission. As a long-time researcher of the assassination, I am most concerned about this examination and would like to have several questions about it answered. My questions are as follows:

1. Under whose authority was this examination made? Was Burke Marshall or any representative or member of the Kennedy family consulted prior or subsequent to the examination and did Mr. Marshall or anyone else consulted object to or specifically agree to this examination?
2. On what dates did the examination occur, and how many hours each day did the examination last?
3. Exactly what materials were displayed to this panel? In this question, I include all of the photographic material of the autopsy, the Zapruder, Nix, and Muchmore films, the individual slides made from the Zapruder film, the bullets and fragments in the Commission's evidence, including Exhibit 399, the rifle, Exhibit 139, the autopsy report and any related documents from the Commission's files or received by the Archives subsequent to the disbanding of the Commission, the President's clothing worn during the assassination. If the panel saw other material or evidence, I would like to know what. I'd also want to know if the panel made any requests for evidence which were refused on any basis, including classified information and materials not in the Archives.
4. News account report that the panel was composed of Lt. Col. Robert R. McNeekin, Dr. Warner U. Spitz, Dr. Fred J. Hedges III, Dr. Richard Lindenberg, and Dr. Alfred Olivier. Were all of these men present during all phases of the examination, and were any others present during any phase of the examination? If anyone else was ever present, I would like to know such person(s) identity(ies), as well as the reason for their presence.
5. Has the Rockefeller Commission, or any representative thereof in an official or unofficial capacity been furnished with copies of any of the photographic material of the autopsy, any photograph of the President's clothing not published by the Warren Commission or the FBI, or any document relating to the autopsy not published by the Commission. Has any request for such photographs or documents been made of the Archives by the Rockefeller Commission in any capacity?

6. Was the examination made pursuant to the "Deed of Gift" by which the autopsy materials were placed in the Archives? If so, who determined that the five men making the examination were competent under the terms of that agreement, and was this determination certified?

7. If the panel viewed the Zapruder film, were any arrangements made or requested for viewing the film in slow motion? Did the panel view the film in slow motion or backwards? Also, if the individual color slides made from the film were viewed, could you tell me how much time was spent by the panel viewing these slides.

If the panel submits or has submitted any report or written document relating to its examination, I would appreciate a copy.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could respond to these questions at your soonest possible convenience.

Thanking you in advance for your troubles, I remain

Sincerely,

Howard Hoffman  
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