

Disputes CIA's Version

Rep. Stokes Confirms JFK Files Report

Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), former chairman of the House Assassinations Committee, confirmed last night that a Central Intelligence Agency officer gained unauthorized access last summer to a safe containing sensitive committee files.

In a floor speech that disputed the CIA's version on several important points, Stokes said a notebook containing autopsy photos of President Kennedy had been taken out of the safe, that a plastic cover had been ripped out of the notebook and one of the photos removed from the plastic cover.

Fingerprints on the plastic, on the inside of the safe door and other materials in the safe were traced to a CIA liaison officer who had no business being in the room alone, Stokes said.

In response to reports in The Washington Post, the CIA has taken the position that the officer in question, who was dismissed, had every right to

be in the room and that he did not enter the safe to get the notebook. The agency has implied that the notebook was inadvertently left outside the safe and that, in any case, the incident was simply a matter of "curiosity" on the officer's part.

Stokes, however, said that the committee staff members who conducted their own investigation of the episode "are not satisfied that the motive has been established."

"They believe 'mere curiosity' is not consistent with the fingerprint evidence," he said.

Stokes, however, noted that apparently nothing was missing from the safe and voiced doubts that further inquiry would resolve the matter.

"In the absence of a full and truthful confession by the agency employe or the others, if any, who were in league with him—or substantial new evidence, all recognize that the matter of motive cannot be ultimately resolved," Stokes said in his prepared

speech. He said he considers the matter "closed" and feels that "the [House] committee and the agency did all they reasonably could be expected to do" last summer.

Today's Activities In Senate, House

Senate

Not in session.

Committees:
Commerce, Science & Transportation — 11 a.m.
Open. Nomination of Sam Nemirow of Virginia
as asst. Commerce Secy. 235 Russell Office Bldg.

House

Meets at 10 a.m.

Committees:

Interstate & Foreign Commerce—10 a.m. Open.
Jnt. hrng.: Energy, Environ., & Natural Res.
(Government Operations), Oversight & Invest., and
Energy & Power Subcom. Conf. hrngs. on diesel
& home heating oil price & supply. 2154 Rayburn
House Office Bldg.

Interstate & Foreign Commerce — 9:30 a.m.
Open. Energy & Power Subcom. Hrng. on prob-
lems of gathering energy information by the
Energy Information Admin. 2123 RHOB.

Judiciary — 9:30 a.m. Open. Criminal Justice
Subcom. Conf. on Criminal Code revision. 2237
RHOB.

Standards of Official Conduct—9:30 a.m. Open.
Hrng. in the matter of Rep. Dicus. B-318 RHOB.

JFK Autopsy Photo Case Is Closed, Rep. Stokes Says

STAR By Jeremiah O'Leary 6/29/79
Washington Star Staff Writer

Chairman Louis Stokes of the House Assassinations Committee says he considers the case of a CIA employee who examined committee photographs of the autopsy on President John Kennedy to be closed.

In a speech on the House floor late last night, the Ohio Democrat said staff members who investigated the former security officer's action are satisfied there was no evidence uncovered that the CIA directed its then-employee to obtain access to the materials. The photos were examined without authorization last July.

But Stokes said staff members of his committee believe mere curiosity is not consistent with the evidence in establishing a motive, even though CIA employees who conducted the agency's investigation "are satisfied that the motive . . . was mere curiosity."

HE ADDED: "In the absence of a full and truthful confession by the agency employee or others, if any, who were in league with him, or substantial new evidence, all recognize that the matter of motive cannot be ultimately resolved.

"I do not know what additional action can be taken in this matter," he said. "I considered it closed in July 1978, I consider it closed now."

Stokes explained that good taste dictates that photographs made of the autopsies on Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. never be made public, and that the committee took extraordinary care that the photographs be safeguarded.

Stokes told the House the photographs were taken from a safe by an authorized person to be used in another room by a medical artist for the panel. The safe door was closed but not locked. Stokes said that when the authorized employee returned later, he found the safe had been opened and one photograph of Kennedy had been ripped out of its cover. The CIA employee's fingerprints were found on the plastic covers of files he was not authorized to see.

STOKES SAID the CIA conducted its own investigation and discharged the

employee. Stokes said there's nothing to indicate anyone profited from the unauthorized examination of the photos.

Access to autopsy materials could only be secured by the personal permission of chief counsel G. Robert Blakey and a log had to be signed each time these materials were examined.

UNAUTHORIZED EXAMINATION
OF
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
MATERIALS

MR. SPEAKER: RECENT NEWSPAPER AND OTHER MEDIA ACCOUNTS HAVE CARRIED THE STORY THAT MATERIALS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE FORMER SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS WERE EXAMINED IN AN UNAUTHORIZED FASHION LAST SUMMER. AS THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE, I AM MAKING THESE REMARKS TO REPORT TO MY COLLEAGUES THE FACTS OF THE MATTER.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS FACED AN IMPORTANT AND COMPLEX TASK. THE HOUSE MANDATED THE COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATHS OF TWO OF OUR NATIONS GREATEST LEADERS, PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

[From cover page: (PLH)]
Congressman Louis Stokes / Special Order
House Select Committee on Assassinations
Embargoed until 9:00 p.m. E.S.T.
June 28, 1979

DEATH IS NOT A PLEASANT SUBJECT, AND ITS DETAILS CAN BE GRUESOME. ONE OF THE LEAST PLEASANT OF THE TASK THAT FACED THE COMMITTEE WAS THE EXAMINATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS MADE DURING THE AUTOPSIES OF THESE TWO MEN. NO ONE WHO KNEW THEM IN LIFE WOULD NOT BE DISTURBED VIEWING THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS IN DEATH.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT WERE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH THE AUTOPSIES OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND DR. KING HAVE NEVER BEEN MADE PUBLIC. GOOD TASTE DICTATES THAT THEY NEVER BE. THE WARREN COMMISSION THAT EXAMINED PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S DEATH IN 1964 DID NOT PUBLISH THEM, AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S FINAL REPORT ON THE DEATHS OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND DR. KING WILL ALSO NOT MAKE THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF EITHER OF THEM PUBLIC.

MR. SPEAKER: THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATION TOOK EXTRAORDINARY CARE THAT THE AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS WERE NOT USED IN AN UNAUTHORIZED FASHION..

THERE ARE SEGMENTS OF THE PRESS THAT ARE SO LACKING IN GOOD TASTE THAT THEY MIGHT WELL HAVE PUBLISHED THEM IF THEY COULD HAVE OBTAINED ACCESS TO THEM. THE SELECT COMMITTEE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO EMPLOY ONLY THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY PERSONS, BUT EVEN THEN, ONLY THOSE WITH A NEED TO USE THE AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS IN THEIR WORK WERE GIVEN ACCESS TO THEM.

THE AUTOPSY MATERIALS WERE KEPT IN A SEPARATE SAFE IN THE SECURITY ROOM OF THE OFFICES OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE'S CLASSIFIED FILES WERE KEPT IN THE SAME ROOM, BUT IN SEPARATE SAFES. THE GENERAL FILES OF THE COMMITTEE WERE HOUSED IN ANOTHER AREA ENTIRELY. IT WAS NECESSARY TO SIGN IN AND OUT ON A LOG BOOK TO SECURE ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED FILES. ACCESS TO THE AUTOPSY MATERIALS COULD ONLY BE SECURED BY THE PERSONAL PERMISSION OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL GIVEN SEPARATELY EVERY TIME ACCESS WAS SOUGHT.

EACH NOTEBOOK THAT CONTAINED A SET OF THE AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS WAS SEPARATELY NUMBERED AND THE USE OF EACH BOOK WAS RECORDED ON A LOG EVERY TIME IT WAS EXAMINED.

IN JULY OF LAST YEAR THE STAFF OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE DISCOVERED THAT A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY EMPLOYEE HAD OBTAINED UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO THE AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. THE STAFF MADE THIS DISCOVERY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICE, THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. THE FACTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A RESEARCHER ON THE STAFF SECURED PERMISSION OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL TO GET ACCESS TO THE KENNEDY AUTOPSY MATERIALS. ACCESS WAS OBTAINED IN THE MORNING. THE MATERIALS WERE TAKEN FROM THE SAFE, AND THE SAFE DOOR WAS CLOSED, BUT NOT LOCKED. THEY WERE TO BE USED IN ANOTHER ROOM BY THE COMMITTEE'S MEDICAL ARTIST TO PREPARE DRAWINGS OF THE PRESIDENT'S WOUNDS.

WHEN HE RETURNED LATER THAT DAY TO RETURN THE PHOTOGRAPHS, HE FOUND THAT THE SAFE HAD BEEN OPENED AND ANOTHER NOTEBOOK HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT OF THE SAFE. ONE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PRESIDENT THAT WAS ENCLOSED IN A PLASTIC COVER HAD BEEN RIPPED OUT OF THE NOTEBOOK AND THE PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN OUT OF ITS COVER.

THE CHIEF COUNSEL OF THE COMMITTEE WAS IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED AND HE ORDERED THE STAFF TO UNDERTAKE AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHO HAD OBTAINED UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO THE MATERIALS. THE FINGERPRINTS OF EACH MEMBER OF THE STAFF WHO HAD AUTHORIZED ACCESS TO THE SAFE WERE MATCHED AGAINST FINGERPRINTS THAT WERE LIFTED FROM THE BOOKS THAT HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE SAFE, THE PLASTIC COVERS IN THE BOOKS, AND THE INSIDE OF THE SAFE DOOR. NONE OF THE STAFF FINGERPRINTS MATCHED THE LIFTED FINGERPRINTS. THE FINGERPRINTS OF A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY EMPLOYEE WERE THEN MATCHED TO THE LIFTED PRINTS.

THE MATCH WAS MADE BY THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICE AND DOUBLE CHECKED BY THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

MR. SPEAKER: THIS MATTER WAS HANDLED BY THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA POLICE AND THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IN A COMPETENT AND CONFIDENTIAL FASHION AND THE COMMITTEE IS GRATEFUL TO THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE.

TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY EMPLOYEE OBTAINED ACCESS TO THE SAFE IT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE HE PLAYED WITH THE COMMITTEE. THE SELECT COMMITTEE HAD ACCESS AT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY TO THE AGENCY'S CLASSIFIED FILES. NOTES WERE TAKEN BY THE STAFF ON THE FILES. THOSE NOTES WERE BROUGHT BY AN AGENCY COURIER UNDER SEAL TO A SPECIAL AREA IN THE COMMITTEE'S OFFICES WHERE THEY WERE LOCKED IN A SAFE TO WHICH ONLY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY HAD THE COMBINATION. NOTHING ELSE WAS KEPT IN THAT ROOM. AN AGENCY EMPLOYEE WAS AVAILABLE DURING WORKING HOURS.

IN THE ROOM TO GIVE THE STAFF ACCESS TO THE NOTES.
THE SAFE COULD ONLY BE OPENED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE
AGENCY EMPLOYEE AND A STAFF MEMBER. IF IT WAS NECESSARY
TO USE THE AGENCY NOTES IN CONNECTION WITH A REGULAR
FILE OF THE COMMITTEE, THE REGULAR FILE WAS BROUGHT TO
THE SPECIAL AREA. IF IT WAS NECESSARY TO USE THE
COMMITTEE'S CLASSIFIED FILES IN CONNECTION WITH THE STAFF
NOTES EITHER THE CLASSIFIED FILE WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE
SPECIAL AREA OR THE STAFF NOTES WERE BROUGHT TO THE
CLASSIFIED FILES IN THE SECURITY ROOM. THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE
ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED THE STAFF NOTES IF THEY WERE REMOVED
FROM THE SPECIAL AREA. BUT THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE WAS NOT
AUTHORIZED TO BE OUT OF THE SPECIAL AREA UNLESS HE WAS
ACCOMPANIED BY A STAFF MEMBER. HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO
HAVE ACCESS TO THE AUTOPSY MATERIALS.

WHEN THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE'S FINGERPRINTS WERE MATCHED TO THE LIFTED FINGERPRINTS, PERMISSION WAS OBTAINED FROM THE AGENCY TO INTERVIEW THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE. THE EMPLOYEE'S PERMISSION WAS OBTAINED TO RECORD THE INTERVIEW. THE EMPLOYEE DENIED HAVING ACCESS TO THE AUTOPSY MATERIALS WHEN HE WAS INTERVIEWED ON ONE DAY. HE WAS THEN INTERVIEWED A SECOND TIME ON A SUCCEEDING DAY. HE DID NOT ADMIT ANY WRONG DOING. HE REFUSED TO BE INTERVIEWED ANY MORE.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MATTER. ITS INVESTIGATION BEGAN AFTER THE COMMITTEE ASKED PERMISSION TO TALK TO THE EMPLOYEE AND BEFORE THE COMMITTEE BROUGHT THE DETAILS OF THE UNAUTHORIZED ACTION, INCLUDING THE FINGERPRINTS, TO THE AGENCY'S ATTENTION. THE AGENCY'S INVESTIGATION INCLUDED INTERVIEWS AND THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN AFTER THE DETAILS OF THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION WERE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AGENCY. THE COMMITTEE WAS GIVEN ACCESS TO EVERYTHING THAT THE AGENCY OBTAINED IN ITS INVESTIGATION AND CERTAIN ADDITIONAL MATERIALS THAT THE COMMITTEE REQUESTED.

THE COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS WHO CONDUCTED THE INVESTIGATION ARE SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE UNCOVERED THAT THE AGENCY DIRECTED THE EMPLOYEE TO OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE AUTOPSY MATERIALS. THEY ALSO BELIEVE ON THE BASIS OF WHAT THEY KNOW THAT THE AGENCY DID NOT DIRECT THE ACTIVITY OF THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE IN THE REGARD. THE AGENCY EMPLOYEES WHO CONDUCTED THE AGENCY'S INVESTIGATION ARE SATISFIED THAT THE MOTIVE FOR OBTAINING UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS WAS MERE CURIOSITY. THE COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS ARE NOT SATISFIED THAT THE MOTIVE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED;

THEY BELIEVE MERE CURIOSITY IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE FINGERPRINT EVIDENCE. BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF A FULL AND TRUTHFUL CONFESSION BY THE AGENCY EMPLOYEE OR THE OTHERS, IF ANY, WHO WERE IN LEAGUE WITH HIM - OR SUBSTANTIAL NEW EVIDENCE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THE MATTER OF MOTIVE CANNOT BE ULTIMATELY RESOLVED.

MR. SPEAKER: I WISH TO EMPHASIS SEVERAL POINTS:

- (1). NO EVIDENCE WAS UNCOVERED THAT ANYTHING WAS TAKEN;
- (2). NO EVIDENCE WAS UNCOVERED THAT ANYTHING WAS MISUSED, OTHER THAN IN THE UNAUTHORIZED EXAMINATION ITSELF;
- (3). NO EVIDENCE WAS UNCOVERED THAT ANYONE HAS PROFITED FROM THESE ACTS;
- (4). NO EVIDENCE WAS UNCOVERED THAT ANYONE OTHER THAN THE EMPLOYEE HIMSELF WAS INVOLVED IN WHAT HE DID;
- (5). THE EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN DISCHARGED FROM THE AGENCY; AND
- (6). TO MY KNOWLDEGE, NO DISCIPLINARY ACTION HAS BEEN THOUGHT NECESSARY OR TAKEN AGAINST ANY OTHER AGENCY EMPLOYEES IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCIDENT.

MR. SPEAKER: I DO NOT KNOW WHAT ADDITIONAL ACTION CAN BE TAKEN IN THIS MATTER. I CONSIDERED IT CLOSED IN JULY 1978 AFTER THE COMMITTEE AND THE AGENCY DID ALL THEY REASONABLY COULD BE EXPECTED TO DO. I CONSIDER IT CLOSED NOW. NEVERTHELESS, IF THE HOUSE OR ANY OF ITS RELEVANT COMMITTEES SEEKS TO INQUIRE INTO THE MATTER FURTHER, I WILL ASSIST IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. IT IS ENOUGH TO ADD THAT SPECULATION ABOUT THE MATTER BEYOND THE EVIDENCE AT HAND IS UNJUST TO ALL CONCERNED. NO ONE WISHES TO KNOW THE TRUTH MORE THAN I DO. BUT THE IRRESPONSIBLE CIRCULATION OF RUMOR AND MYTH ONLY FEED PARANOIA; THEY DO NOT QUENCH THE THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE.

MR. SPEAKER: I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO HAVE THE ARTICLES TO WHICH I REFERRED INCORPORATED IN THE THE RECORD AT THIS POINT.