

MEMORANDUM

085970

TO: File
FROM: Andy Purdy
DATE: August 17, 1977
RE: Search for missing autopsy materials

I spoke with DR. JACK C. HARPER on August 8th (office: 214/942-2878), the uncle of the pre-medical student who found the skull fragment in Dealey Plaza. DR. HARPER presumes the skull fragment is with the other skull fragments and said that his nephew gave it to the FBI. DR. HARPER saw the fragment on the Sunday following the assassination and took it to Methodist Hospital on Monday at which time he contacted the FBI.

DR. HARPER said the consensus of the doctors who viewed the skull fragment was that it was part of the occipital region. DR. HARPER said he retained a photo of the skull fragment for about a year at which time the FBI took it from him. He says he believes his nephew still has such a photograph. DR. HARPER said the skull fragment had relatively fresh blood on it.

I spoke with DR. A. B. CAIRNS on August 9, 1977, regarding the HARPER skull fragment. DR. CAIRNS has retired from his position as Chief of Pathology at Methodist Hospital and is now living at 2303 Post Oak Road

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Pg 233)

Page Nine
August 17, 1977

DR. HUMES speaks very very highly of ARLEN SPECTER. DR. HUMES said he stops in to see MR. SPECTER whenever he is in the Philadelphia area. He indicated that he went to Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia and that he lived awhile in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. It should be noted that he was very willing to talk to us and was surprised that he hadn't heard from us sooner. His attitude was much friendlier than his wife's had been. She indicated, without solicitation, that her husband and her family had been hounded with numerous questions and contacts over the years from people interested in this case and many who were critical of the job her husband did. DR. HUMES was very concerned that we not interrupt his vacation for our work. He indicated that he has lived with the after shocks of his participation in the autopsy all of his life.

Jim Kelly and I talked by telephone with JOHN THOMAS STRINGER, JR., the autopsy photographer, on August 12th.

MR. STRINGER said that he had been director of medical photography at the Naval Medical School. He said the head of the school at that time was CAPTAIN STOVER.

MR. STRINGER was called by DR. HUMES, the Director of Pathology, around dinner time on November 22, 1963, to come in to work. STRINGER assumed that the nature of the assign-

Reference copy, JFK Collection; HSCA (RS 233)

Page Ten
August 17, 1977

ment was to take pictures of the Kennedy autopsy. His equipment included a 4in. by 5 in. graphic "view camera" which had a standard lens and used film holders with one film on each side (two altogether). He said there were probably flood lights used.

MR. STRINGER said he waited along side of the autopsy table in the morgue waiting to be told to begin. He said DR. HUMES gave him the go ahead. He said DR. HUMES was the one who primarily told him what pictures he wanted taken during the surgery. STRINGER said the operation was like a three ring circus with so many people present including a number of flag rank military men. Some of these military men talked of bringing in metal detectors (possibly ADMIRAL GALLOWAY) to help in the search for any bullets or bullet fragments in the President's body.

STRINGER said that there was a school of Metal Photography there and one of the corpsman was on duty there that night. It was his film which was destroyed by a federal agent. He believes the man's name was RIEBE (possibly RABE) who had a designation of HM-3. He said RIEBE was a student there whose job it was to help STRINGER. RIEBE had a small camera which the agent opened and exposed. STRINGER does not believe the student was going to take any pictures or had taken any pictures. He says he didn't overhear any conver-

Reference copy, JFK Collection: ESCA (RG 233)

Page Eleven
August 17, 1977

sation between the agent and RIEBE.

STRINGER said he does not remember how many pictures he took but he is sure that he exposed each of the two sides of each film holder used. He said (following STOVER's orders) that after each film holder was exposed he gave it to a Secret Service man standing by. He said that Secret Service man later signed a release to STOVER. STRINGER said he has a copy of that receipt at his home in Florida.

STRINGER said the first time he saw the photographs was in 1966. He said the photographs were not developed by his people so he has no information about what happened to them between the time he turned them over to the Secret Service man and the time he viewed them again in 1966 along with the autopsy doctors.

STRINGER said it was his recollection that all the photographs he had taken were not present in 1966. He noted that the receipt he had said some of the film holders had no film in one side of the cassettes. He said the receipt said this happened in two or three of the film holders where one side only was allegedly loaded. He said he could understand it if the film holders were reported to have poorly exposed or defective film but could not believe that there were any sides of the film holders which were not loaded with film. STRINGER said he did not take any black and white photographs and that

Reference copy, JFK Collection: ESCA (RG 213)

Page Twelve
August 17, 1977

those that were made must have been from the color transparencies in the two step process. STRINGER said that his recollection that all the photographs he took were not present in the materials he viewed in 1966 was based on the receipt. However, STRINGER also said that he thought he had taken some interior photographs of the President's chest ("I believe so"). He said he didn't recall if these photographs were taken before or after the vital organs were removed. He indicated that he took no contemporaneous or subsequent notes of his recollections. He said he was present in the room where the autopsy was conducted between approximately 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. on the night of the 22nd and 3:00 to 3:30 a.m. on the morning of the 23rd.

STRINGER said he believed the X-rays probably included X-rays of the extremities because this was "...generally routine".

STRINGER said he took some photographs of the brain in the morgue two or three days after the autopsy. He said he was there with Doctors HUMES and BOSWELL. He says he gave this film to HUMES and received no receipt. He believes he took at least six color transparencies. He indicated he wasn't sure if he viewed these photographs when he saw the materials in 1966.

Reference copy, JFK Collection: ESCA (Pg 233)