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Neither the Commission nor Specter ever saw any of the photographs or x-rays corroborating the autopsy report.

Gaeton Fonzi
Investigator for Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations

14 THE AUTOPSY PHOTOGRAPHS AND X-RAYS

The autopsy photos and x-rays, along with the Zapruder film, were among the most carefully guarded and suppressed evidence in the JFK assassination. Only when Jim Garrison started his investigation in 1967 did *Life* magazine reluctantly part with the Zapruder film, and only then did it become available to the public by way of bootlegged copies made in the outside developing laboratory utilized by *Life*. Although the word "shocking" is now almost a cliché, it aptly describes the manner in which the autopsy photographs and x-rays were handled by the government. It is shocking to know that the unfortunate autopsy pathologists, Dr. Humes and Dr. Boswell, were not allowed to examine the photographs, and were only able to superficially examine the x-rays before finishing their report on the weekend after the assassination. Roy Kellerman of the Secret Service retained possession of the photographs and x-rays in the early morning of November 24 and turned them over to his chief, Robert Bouck, whose office was in the Executive Office building of the White House. It was not until three years after the autopsy that, finally, Humes and Boswell were called forth to examine them. And this was done under highly controlled conditions.

If Secret Service agent James K. Fox had not somehow obtained a set of the photographs and x-rays (or, rather, a partial set) we might never have seen them. But Fox did obtain a partial set and

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facilities we are making to the FBI and the Secret Service and everybody else. We would like you to have that. That will give you a really good picture along with the synopsis you have as to what we think might be some further guidance in this further picture.

Is that the kind of thing, Senator Cooper, that you had in mind, would that be helpful?

Sen. Cooper. Yes, I know we have to finish the agenda but I thought after that even at this point, there have been questions raised in your own mind about --

Mr. McCloy. About direction.

Sen. Cooper. And in our own mind, I have one or two it might be well to discuss it.

Mr. McCloy. Let me ask you about this raw material business that is here. What does it consist of? Does it consist of the raw material of the autopsy? They talk about the colored photographs of the President's body -- do we have those?

Mr. Rankin. Yes, it is part of it, a small part of it.

Mr. McCloy. Are they here?

Mr. Rankin. Yes. But we don't have the minutes of the autopsy, and we asked for that because we wanted to see what doctor A said about something while he was saying it, to see whether it is supported by the conclusions in the autopsy and so forth, and then we have volumes of material in which people have purported to have said, or say to various agents certain things, they are not sworn,

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This is page 35 of the Executive Session of 1/21/64. Despite later contrary pretenses, Rankin is here explicit in saying the Commission did have "the colored photographs of the President's body", the autopsy pictures. This means there was never any need for the fake sketches used as "evidence" (see p. 136). There is no evidence that "minutes" ever existed.



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THE ANTERIOR-POSTERIOR (AP) X-RAY

A great value of the AP x-ray in Exhibit 14-2 is that, except for one small anomaly, it is authentic. The portion that is not authentic is the bright circle labeled as "6.5mm object," which appears to be a sliver of a bullet embedded in the outside of the skull on the back of the head. None of the autopsy pathologists at Bethesda, or others present, observed such an object, despite the fact that finding a bullet was one of their primary objectives. Dr. Mantik suspects that this object may have been artificially superimposed on a much smaller authentic metal fragment in a composite forgery after the original x-rays were developed. This was confirmed, in part, when Dr. Mantik interviewed Jerrol Custer, one of the x-ray technicians who was present at the autopsy. Custer told Mantik that the day after the autopsy, a skull was brought to him, strangely, and he was asked to x-ray it while placing a bullet on the skull. This indicated to Dr. Mantik that there was something very suspicious going on with regard to the x-rays.

By comparing the AP x-ray with an autopsy photograph that is considered to be authentic, an important base can be established: The AP x-ray in Exhibit 14-2 is consistent with the head wound photo in Exhibit 14-4. In the previous chapter we established that the head wound photo is authentic, and that it is consistent with the descriptions of the head wound by both Dr. Humes and Dr. Boswell at the autopsy, and that it is consistent with the description of the head wound described by Paul O'Connor. What we have here is an anchor point for our discussion: The AP x-ray, the autopsy photo of the head wound, and the testimony by key witnesses at the autopsy are all consistent. However, the lateral x-ray is inconsistent with these items, at least in area P where we find the patch.

What is remarkable here is that Dr. Mantik's analysis (albeit greatly simplified in this presentation) is in my opinion almost completely consistent with the fundamental discoveries of David Lifton and all the other evidence that I have presented in this book, including evidence of missing frames in the Zapruder film.

My conclusion that frames are missing in the Zapruder film was thoroughly discussed in preceding chapters. It is based, in part, on the fact that at no frame in the film do we actually see a blow-out of bone and brains from the back of Kennedy's head despite the fact that in frame 335 we do see the resultant flap of scalp *after* the blow-out had occurred. Now we have the AP x-ray which also shows that a blow-out in the back of the head had taken place. This again is

corroborating proof that frames were deleted in the Zapruder film to take out the eruption of brain and skull material that should have, must have, appeared at the rear of the head at the time of the fatal head shot, had not frames been deleted.

An equally important corollary point is that if, in fact, the massive wound in the *side* and *top* of the head (as shown in Exhibit 14-4 and confirmed in the AP x-ray) actually did occur in Dealey Plaza, then many more frames must have been deleted from the Zapruder film—frames that would have shown the blow-out of brain and skull in the right side and top of the head. No such blow-out is present in any of the frames. The reason is obvious: Alteration of the Zapruder film to that extent would have been impracticable by removing frames, because it would have required that *all of the frames* after the fatal head shot be removed.* This would have created a major, uncorrectable, and obvious disturbance in the continuity of movement in the film. *Therefore, my conclusion is that the large blow-out of the side and top of the head that is shown in the autopsy photo in Exhibit 14-4 never occurred at Dealey Plaza.*** Rather, it is the result of dissection of the head and removal of brain and skull material in a secret location, after the body left Dallas, as was first proposed by David Lifton.

I have found no scenario of events other than David Lifton's that so completely and consistently fits the cumulative evidence in the Zapruder film, the autopsy photographs, and the autopsy x-rays, combined with virtually all of the testimonies of the dozens of witnesses. The conclusion, even though many find it difficult to accept, is unavoidable: Kennedy's body was secretly removed from *Air Force One*, taken to a secret location where the exit wound in the head was enlarged to obscure its nature and to remove incriminating bullet pathways and fragments, and a large portion of the brain was removed; and the body was then delivered to the Bethesda morgue. The ambulance that arrived at the front of the hospital contained the bronze casket, without Kennedy's body in it.

*The blow-out in the *back* of the head would not show in the side view in the Zapruder film if only two or three frames were removed to delete that event. But a blow-out in the *side* of the head is another matter, because removal of a large number of frames (enough to remove the entire view of the side of the head) would have been required, impossible to conceal.

**One remote possibility that has been offered to challenge this conclusion is that the bone under the scalp might have separated from it, as a result of a frontal bullet wound, in such a way that a disruption in the external appearance of the hair and scalp was not discernible in the Zapruder film. I find this notion to be extremely implausible, to say the least.

It is clear to attempt was made Zapruder film at president's body, question is, why been a very power

At this point in that, based on th by a conspirator the crime was co ernment, starting dence is persuas counts. What is who committed government act dented assault o

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Hunt (a.k.a. "Eduardo") as passing money to this group of people in a motel room in Dallas on November 21, and said that Jack Ruby visited the motel after E. Howard Hunt had left. Lorenz testified that she became concerned about the operation. She had Sturgis take her to the Dallas airport on November 21, and took a flight back to Miami. Lorenz testified that the caravan of cars was loaded with a trunk full of weapons, and that she later learned from Frank Sturgis that the trip's purpose was to assassinate Kennedy; that Lorenz had missed out on the "big one." Whether this was the actual team that assassinated Kennedy is not certain, but Lorenz has emphatically stated that she understood from Sturgis that they were involved in the operation.

In addition to peer pressure, I had discarded Lorenz's story partly because she swore that Lee Harvey Oswald was in the group in the second car that traveled to Dallas. Unless this was another Oswald look-alike, this could not be true because Oswald was working at the Texas Schoolbook Depository during the period in question. I attempted to contact Marita Lorenz through a friend who knew her family in Philadelphia, but to no avail, so I deleted Lorenz's story from my manuscript except for the photo caption. Now I have reinserted it, although it still has some problems, such as Oswald being in the caravan as well as Gerald Patrick Hemming, who has denied it, and her vagueness as to the date of departure from Miami.

It was at this point that Bob Dorff became very interested in the Masen/Elrod story and organized a small conference to be held in San Francisco on July 4-6, 1996. The agenda for the conference was a review of the La Fontaine book, primarily the part on John Elrod. Also included on the agenda was an update on the latest evidence about Oswald in Mexico City. Attendees were Bill Adams (the prime researcher for the La Fontaine book), veteran researchers and writers Paul Hoch and Peter Dale Scott, Mary Ferrell, Carol Hewett, Jim Lesar of the Assassination Archives, Bob Dorff, and myself.

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

Our discussion group met at the Golden Gate Holiday Inn on the evening of July 4, 1996. Marathon sessions continued until noon on July 6, with time out for sleep, food, and drinks, and for watching a spectacular display of fireworks from Mary Ferrell's suite on the twenty-sixth floor of the hotel. As I anticipated, we were unable to reach a consensus on the viability of the evidence concerning

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FBI agents Sibert and
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Kellerman delivers x-ray
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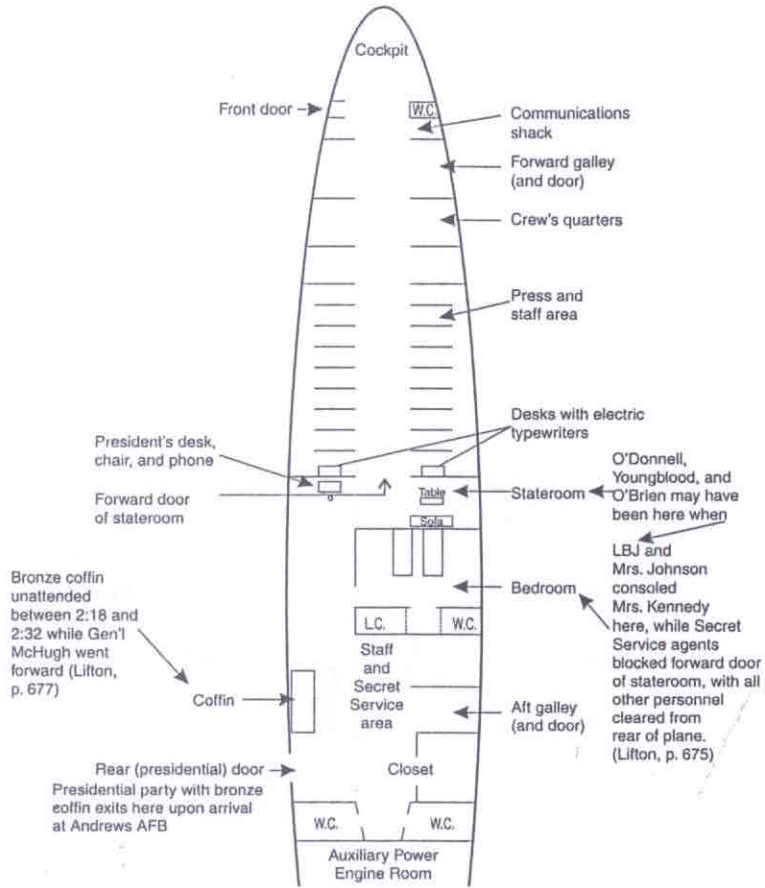


Exhibit 13-4. Diagram of the Interior of *Air Force One*. The statements above require careful study and are *not* presented as clear and convincing evidence of when a shift of the president's body was made; it shows only possibilities. At this point it remains a mystery as to whether the body was hidden in a compartment aboard *Air Force One* and removed after the plane landed in Washington, D.C., or was taken off *Air Force One* in Dallas and flown back to Washington by a military or private plane. Recent research by Craig Roberts has revealed that there was a large cargo compartment where the body could have been hidden underneath the floor where the casket was placed, accessible through a trap door under the carpeting. This compartment had a cargo door on the bottom of the airplane.

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DEATH
RESIDUAL

10-NOVEMBER

William M

On October 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy sat in the White House, talking to the press. At first he was nervous; Mr. Kennedy's portrait of the President is a very convincing one. He lived in the same place as the Massachusetts Governor. He had been separated from Kennedy's family. The people heard the same news. The same foreign news. Deep into

two years after the assassination of Kennedy would be continued on

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The lines of verse quoted on page 374 are from a poem composed by the Irish poet D. L. Kelleher for the christening of Dr. Thomas Kiernan's son. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Kiernan for permission to reprint.

The lines of verse appearing on pages 400 and 401 are from "To an Athlete Dying Young" from "A Shropshire Lad"—Authorized Edition—from *The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman*. Copyright © 1939, 1940, 1959 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Also reprinted by permission of the Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman, and Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., publishers of A. E. Housman's *Collected Poems*.

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FIRST EDITION

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was there. It never occurred to him that Johnson might be behind the closed powder room door, and he sped ahead, convinced that Kilduff was mistaken.

By now Godfrey had become part of a task force. He had struck out twice, so while he was inspecting the bedroom O'Donnell had dispatched Ted Clifton, Roy Kellerman, and Clint Hill to the front of the plane. As it turned out, all three learned the correct explanation before McHugh, Valenti, Stoughton, and Homer Thornberry crowded around Clifton, saying, "We can't go yet," "We've got to find a federal judge," "Lyndon has word from the Attorney General, he called Washington." Kellerman and Hill heard none of this; they were barging up the aisle after Swindal. Roy burst into the communications shack and saw the ramp. Wondering why it hadn't been wheeled away, he descended the steps. Just then Kilduff flashed by.

"You'd better get aboard, we're going to take off," Roy warned him.

"No, we can't, we have to have the oath," Mac replied. Over his shoulder he called to Clint, who was standing at the stair head, "A judge is going to swear in Johnson. Bobby requested it."

He had justified the delay to everyone except Godfrey McHugh. There is something marvelous about the General's continuing ignorance. By his own account he made five journeys through the length of the aircraft before he found out why they weren't moving. Even O'Donnell and O'Brien knew before Godfrey did. Wandering into the staff cabin, Larry heard someone ask Marie Fehmer if she had typed the Presidential oath of office. She nodded and he comprehended everything. At about the same time, O'Donnell overheard a discussion in the stateroom, and when someone called out, "We need a photographer and we're waiting for a judge," Ken, though he disapproved, understood what was meant. McHugh alone remained in the dark. Ted Clifton would have enlightened him. Somehow they missed connections. Clint and Roy could have quickly briefed him, but they had become bogged down in Secret Service details; Johnson's decision to travel on 26000 meant that Roy's shift assignments were fouled up. The four-to-twelve Trade Mart men, whom he had designated as the new President's bodyguards, were on 86970; the weary eight-to-four agents were here. Roy threw up his hands. A reversal now would add to the muddle; it was safer to stand pat.

Roy had another problem. Passing through the staff cabin he had been struck by the unusually large number of passengers and by the unfamiliarity of their faces. On any other trip he would have recognized them all—would, in fact, have known who they were in advance. The one difference between Air Force One and Air Force Two was that Air Force One always carried a passenger manifest. It was a basic security precaution; no matter how short the flight, a Presidential guest could not mount either ramp unless his name had been typed on that sheet. Stepping into the

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cockpit with Clint, Roy worriedly said to Swindal, "There are a lot of people on this plane." The Colonel said, "We can carry them." Kellerman saw Rufus Youngblood entering the communications shack. He asked him, "Do you know all these people here?" Youngblood assured him that Lem Johns had already started a manifest.

This was a confrontation between opposites—between Kellerman, Kennedy's chief bodyguard, and Youngblood, head of the Johnson detail. Mystified by the bustling around him, Roy felt thwarted, while Rufus' briskness had continued unabated. He had dealt with the manifest. He had sent Jack Ready to the gate to meet Sarah Hughes, and he had asked Chief Curry to accompany Ready and identify Sarah when she drove up. But no one could anticipate every problem that afternoon, and the Youngblood men were as worried about possible overload as the Kellerman men. Before the arrival of the hearse Emory Roberts had carefully calculated the probable number of passengers. He reckoned on a coffin and Jacqueline Kennedy, and that was all. As he later confessed, he hadn't realized that Mrs. Kennedy would bring her husband's aides with her; the presence of O'Donnell, O'Brien, and Powers dismayed him. Counting both waves, there were twenty-seven people, and despite the pilot's assurances the Johnson agents became anxious. As a consequence Johns asked several minor members of the Kennedy party to leave, and other passengers who had ridden on 26000 since leaving Washington were turned away before they could mount the ramp. One was Ralph Yarborough. For two days everyone had been trying to lure Yarborough to the Vice President's side. Suddenly he was an outcast. He asked for a reason, and Ted Clifton told him, "Maximum security."

Clifton had swiftly adjusted to the transition. His reasoning was clear. As a general he held the "special trust and confidence" of the President. The occupant of the Presidency had changed, and Clifton had to change, too. His duty was to the office, not to the man. Following a talk with Valenti and Thornberry he functioned as President Johnson's military aide.

Meanwhile McHugh, who felt otherwise, was building up steam. The conflict had become irreconcilable. The Kennedy party, on the one hand, believed that Air Force One's chief passenger was their fallen leader; since he could not give them orders, they looked to Mrs. Kennedy, who shared their feeling that they must quit Dallas, and who was bewildered by the delay. The attitude of the Johnson party, on the other hand, was summed up by Youngblood, who drew Lem Johns aside during the turmoil and emphatically told him, "When the boss says we go, then we go."

After the Kellerman-Youngblood huddle had broken up Godfrey had reached the front of the plane for the third time. He spotted Mac Kilduff. Bounding toward him—Kilduff had the impression that he was "galloping"—he said hotly, "We've got to take off immediately."

"Not until Johnson has taken the oath," said Kilduff.

President Johnson say "Bobby." Bob Kennedy was the one man who could have persuaded O'Donnell to withdraw his objections. If Bob wanted the new President sworn in in Dallas—and the Kennedy people never dreamed that Johnson might have misunderstood the Attorney General (though he apparently did)—they would just have to sweat out the judge's arrival. They only hoped she would hurry. They literally prayed for her swift arrival. To Clifton, as to O'Brien, the Parkland ogres had sprouted to colossal size. The possibility that the slain President's body might be kidnaped seemed very real.

President Johnson crossed the aisle, settled into the yellow upholstery of the Presidential chair, and ordered more vegetable soup from Joe Ayres. Kilduff was in and out, briefing him. He had been unable to find a Signal Corps technician who would record the oath, but the Dictaphone on the desk by the soup bowl would probably serve. He himself could hold its microphone near Johnson and the judge during the ceremony. Afterward the Dictabelt, transferred to quarter-inch tape, could be distributed to the networks. Cecil Stoughton had prepared two cameras, one a 35-millimeter Alpa Reflex, which did not require a flash, and his Hasselblad, which did. The Hasselblad was equipped with a wide-angle lens, nearly 90 degrees; with it, Stoughton could photograph the whole stateroom. The fluorescent light overhead was bad, but he had loaded his reels with extremely fast film—Tri-X, ASA 400. Development should present no problems.

The soup craze had been succeeded by an ice water craze. Every throat was parched. The stifling air seemed thick enough to congeal. If they waited another five minutes, Johnson would have to change his shirt again.

The bugbear of blackshirts obsessing the mafia was entirely hallucination. Only one Dallas man had come to Love Field from Parkland; Vernon Oneal was standing by Gate 28, waiting to reclaim his Cadillac. By coincidence the undertaker's parents had once rented a duplex from Sarah Hughes, and he, not Chief Curry, became the first person to note her arrival at the airport. Oneal had overheard the chief and Jack Ready discussing her. He saw her gay sports car swerve around the "Spirit of Flight" statue and shouted, "There she is!"

Curry greeted her and took her arm. "Barefoot Sanders wants you to call him about the oath," he told her. "There's a phone on the plane."

She nodded absently and hurried after him to the ramp. Jim Swindal took over there. He escorted her up the steps and introduced her to Ted Clifton. She said, "I have to use your telephone. The U.S. Attorney has the oath of office."

"Here it is," said a voice, and a hand thrust Marie Fehmer's 3 x 5 card at her. Pocketing it, Sarah followed Clifton through the staff cabin, into the stateroom. She embraced the President, Mrs. Johnson, and her fellow Texans, and Johnson said, "We'll get as many people in here as possible."

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He dispatched men to round up witnesses. Valenti, Youngblood, Roberts, and Lem Johns were sent into the staff area to extend a general invitation, and then he himself went in.

Gesticulating broadly, he announced, "If anybody wants to join in the swearing-in ceremony, I would be happy and proud to have you." There was no stampede. Johnson's friends and allies excepted—and since he had just acquired possession of the aircraft, they were a minority—26000's regular passengers hung back. Their aloofness can only be understood in the context of 2:35 p.m. Though the assassin had been caught, forty minutes would pass before the networks even announced that "a suspect" had been arrested. In the absence of information there was a general revulsion, not only toward Dallas, but toward the entire State of Texas. Lyndon Johnson, the most famous of Texans, was the innocent victim of that visceral reaction, and Cecil Stoughton's subsequent negatives are stark evidence of what Larry O'Brien called "the tension on the plane." The spectators who were to be framed in Stoughton's lens were a lopsided group. Despite the width of the Hasselblad lens, the photographer did not record the presence of a single major Kennedy aide. Dr. Burkley stood behind someone else. There were two agents, there were three Kennedy secretaries—Evelyn, Mary, and Pam—each of whom were Kilduff and his two pool reporters. There was Underwood, and there was led in by Jack Valenti and Lem Johns. The new Chief Executive thanked them effusively, kissed Evelyn's hand and Pam's and called Pam "little lady."

Godfrey McHugh was beside John Kennedy's coffin, standing rigidly at attention. Ken O'Donnell withdrew to the corridor. O'Brien participated in setting up the ritual which Lyndon Johnson had said Bob Kennedy wanted; then he retreated behind Sarah Hughes. The feeling extended to members of the permanent Presidential staff. Stoughton himself wished he were elsewhere. In his prints two tiny points of light identify the spectacles of Ira Gearhart, but the bagman and his football had to be there; the thermonuclear threat was no respecter of tragedy. Gearhart was alone. The crewmen had quietly retired. Boots Miller of the baggage detail was in the staff cabin with his face averted, cradling in his arms a paper bag containing Jacqueline Kennedy's ruined pillbox hat, and Jim Swindal recoiled down the aisle to Clint Hill's side and pressed his face against Roy Kellerman's broad back. As 26000's pilot the Colonel should have been present. Nobody had known that he took politics seriously. But beneath his Milton Caniff air the dapper Alabaman had idolized John Kennedy. He had not known he could suffer so. He felt as though he had a stone in his chest. It would have taken every Johnson agent to drag him into the stateroom. As he explained afterward, "I just didn't want to be in the picture, I didn't belong to the Lyndon Johnson team. My President was in that box."

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