

X-rays and photographs of President Kennedy, taken at autopsy.

Excerpts from testimony of Comdr. James J. Humes, Director of Laboratories of the Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, who conducted and supervised autopsy; testified March 16, 1964.

Arlen Specter. Precisely what X-rays or photographs were taken before the dissection started?

Commander Humes. Some of these X-rays were taken before and some during the examination which also maintains for the photographs, which were made as the need became apparent to make such.

However, before the postmortem examination was begun, anterior, posterior and lateral X-rays of the head, and of the torso were made, and identification type photographs, I recall having been made of the full face of the late President. A photograph showing the massive head wound with the large defect that was associated with it. To my recollection all of these were made before the proceedings began.

Several others, approximately 15 to 20 in number, were made in total before we finished the proceedings.

Mr. Specter. Now were those X-rays or photographs or both when you referred to the total number?

Commander Humes. By the number I would say they are in number 15 to 20. There probably was ten or 12 X-ray films exposed in addition.

II, 349.

Commander Humes. When appraised of the necessity for our appearance before this Commission, we did not know whether or not the photographs which we had made would be available to the Commission. So to assist in making our testimony more understandable to the Commission members, we decided to have made drawings, schematic drawings, of the situation as we saw it, as we recorded it and as we recall it.

II, 349

Mr. Specter. Is the taking of photographs and X-rays routine or is this something out of the ordinary?

Commander Humes. No sir; this is quite routine in cases of this sort of violent death in our training. In the field of forensic pathology we have found that the photographs and X-rays are of most value, the X-rays particularly in finding missiles which have a way of going in different directions sometimes, and particularly as documentary evidence these are considered invaluable in the field of forensic pathology.

II, 350.

Commander Humes. The photographs ... and the X-rays were exposed in the morgue of the Naval Medical Center on this night and they were not developed, neither the X-rays or the photographs. They were submitted to ... either the Federal Bureau of Investigation or to the Secret Service, I am not sure /which/.

Mr. Specter. Did you submit those yourself immediately after they were taken, Dr. Humes?

Commander Humes. Again, one of the senior people present. I believe my own Commanding Officer, Captain /John H./ Stover, took care of turning this material over to these authorities, and receiving a receipt for this information, for this material. It was - I supervised the positioning of the body for various of these examinations but as far as beyond that, I did not consider that my responsibility.

II, 351

Rep. Gerald R. Ford. May I ask what size are the pictures to which you refer?

Commander Humes. We exposed both black and white and color negatives, Congressman. They were exposed in the morgue during the examination. They were not developed. The kodachrome negatives when developed would be 405. They were in film carriers or cassettes, as were the black and white. Of course they could be magnified.

Rep. Ford. Have those been examined by personnel at Bethesda?

Commander Humes. No, sir. We exposed these negatives; we turned them over. Here I must ask the counsel again for advice - to the Secret Service.

Mr. Specter. Yes; it was the Secret Service.

Commander Humes. They were turned over to the Secret Service in their cassettes unexposed and I have not seen any of them since. This is the photographs. The X-rays were developed in our X-ray department on the spot that evening, because we had to see those right then as part of our examination, but the photographs were made for the record and for other purposes.

Rep. Ford. But they had never been actually developed for viewing.

Commander Humes. I do not know, sir.

II, 372