

FEDERAL ARCHIVES

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO : Ken Klein

FROM: Jim Kelly and Andy Purdy

DATE: September 6, 1977

SUBJ: Interview with Robert I. Bouck, August 30, 1977, 2:00 P.M.,  
Federal Reserve Martin Building, 20th & C Streets, Room 4128

At the time of the assassination, Mr. Bouck was head of the Protective Research Division of the U. S. Secret Service. That division is primarily responsible for threats against the President, visitors to the Northwest gate of the White House, anti-bugging and anti-bomb protection, and the logistics of Presidential travel and lodging.

On the day after the assassination, Bouck received specimens, photographs and x-rays, and many tissue slides from Agent Kellerman. Bouck said all "...basically labeled..." written on tape." Bouck said he made a general inventory by category, but not by each item. Bouck said he believes some of the photographs and x-rays were received later but believes all the specimens were obtained "...right away."

Bouck said he was maintaining the security of these items for Dr. Burkley, the White House physician. The items were stored in the Executive Office Building, in a room adjacent to the White House Police room where they monitored the alarm. They were stored in a four-drawer safe file. Only Mr. Bouck and his administrative assistant, Edith Duncan, had the combination.

Bouck's oral instructions were to maintain custody of the materials and not to release them without the approval of the Chief of the Secret Service, then Jim Rowley. When Kellerman first gave him the materials he told him they were "...very important..." Bouck elaborated on these security precautions saying that to gain clearance one would have to get "...authori-  
zation from the Department of Justice."

Bouck recalls the occasion of the transfer of the materials to Mrs. Lincoln at the National Archives. He said the transfer was authorized and occurred "...quite awhile after the assassination." Bouck said that possibly two boxes were taken from the Executive Office Building to Mrs. Lincoln.

Prior to the transfer, Bouck said the materials had only been seen "...about twice...." He said he did not recall when they were seen but believes was seen by "...some representative of the Warren Commission who asked to see the inventory or the

materials." Mr. Bouck said he "...at least gave them the inventory to see, but a copy was not given to them." He said the "...stuff basically remained in the drawer." Bouck said he is not sure the materials themselves were viewed and believes Tom Kelley may have been present during the inspection by the Warren Commission representative who he believes was "...possibly the general counsel or a staff attorney."

Bouck believes the other time the material was viewed was "...rather early, when someone from Secret Service and possibly Mr. Kelley looked to see what was in there."

Bouck said the transfer to the National Archives was accomplished by himself and Tom Kelley. He said that a final inventory was prepared after the materials were first checked against the first inventory. Bouck said Mrs. Duncan typed the receipt which Mrs. Lincoln later signed. The receipt was prepared in the offices of the Secret Service. Bouck said that "...possibly Dr. Burkley came for it." Bouck said that both inventories came up with the same results. Dr. Burkley did not bring any other materials to the transfer. The materials were transferred personally by Bouck and Kelly in Bouck's automobile.

Bouck said that Mrs. Lincoln verified the receipt. He said Mr. Lincoln "...checked the items against the inventory list and she took no exceptions to it." Bouck thinks that it was possible that George Dalton, who worked for Mrs. Lincoln may have been present but he "...doesn't know." He did say that the receipt which Mrs. Lincoln signed and was signed by Admiral Burkley and a number witnesses was signed in a two-step process. He said Admiral Burkley's signature was witnessed by a number of people who were not present when the material was then taken to the Archives and signed by Mrs. Lincoln. For example, he doesn't believe that Edith Duncan or Chester Miller were present at the Archives' transfer.

Bouck said that "...personally counted the items when he first received them." These items included clothing and the autopsy material from the Naval Hospital brought to him by Kellerman. He said he "...doesn't recall giving Kellerman a receipt...it is not very customary within the Service itself." He said the material did include photographs, x-rays, and specimens. Regarding the item labelled "gross material" Bouck said he "...just recalls (sic) some kind of label...taken either from the original listing or actually on the label or described at the time to him that way."

001178

-3-

Bouck said the slides were in small boxes and they were also several "...bottle-type containers...somewhat bigger than styrofoam cups."

Regarding the photographs Bouck first said that they were "...all processed when I got them." He said he believes Kellerman brought the specimens also. Bouck said that some of the clothing came later from a different agent than Kellerman.

Bouck said "...it seems to me there was more than one container." Regarding the stainless steel container Bouck said it was "...sealed with tape around it." Bouck said they transported the items to the in Archives in cardboard boxes said "...I don't recall anything to do with a foot locker."

Bouck said that James Fox was his photographer at the White House and believes that he processed the black and white prints ("...little snapshots..."). Bouck said "...I believe they had nothing to do with the big prints or the color ones." Bouck said that James Fox processed one or two or several rolls of color film at another facility. He said that while there is a photo lab in the Executive Office Building it did not have color facilities and was not equipped to do large prints. ✓

Bouck said that he and Kelley talked later "as friends" regarding the tissue materials on the issue of "...whether some of the tissue should be preserved." They were concerned about the sensationalizing press ridiculing the deceased President. They decided that "...it was in the interest of history to take a chance and preserve them."

Bouck said "... it seems to me that the container held the brain or heart." Bouck said that to his knowledge none of the material was sent to the family or destroyed.

Bouck said "...it seemed to me a portion of the brain was preserved." He said he was sure that this stainless steel container could have held the brain and said there was "...fluid in it...remember it slushing around." Bouck said that "...possibly Kellerman knew the contents of the stainless steel container." Bouck said he had a "...vague recollection that it was the brain."

Bouck said he recalls some subsequent discussion regarding the films, specifically that some of the film was blank, but "...not that the film holders were blank."

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Bouck retired in June, 1968 after having left the White House about one year earlier.

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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

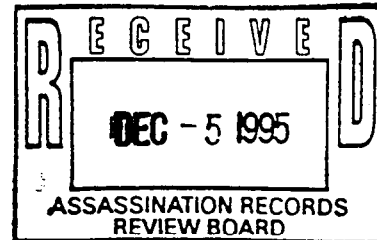
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