

CONTACT PROFILE**Document's Author:** Douglas Home/ARRB**Date Created:** 05/02/96**Contact Description****Contact Name:** Robert I. Bouck**Company:****Title:****Category:** Witnesses/Consultants**Street Address:****Phone Number:****FAX Number:****E-mail Address:****HSCA Letter Sent:****Additional Information**

Mr. Bouck was head of the Protective Research Section (PRS) of the U.S. Secret Service at the time of the Kennedy Assassination.

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MEETING REPORT



Document's Author: Douglas Home/ARRB

Date Created: 05/02/96

Meeting Logistics

Date: 04/30/96
Agecny Name: Witnesses/Consultants
Attendees: Jeremy Gunn, Tim Wray, Joan Zimmerman, Douglas Horne
Topic: Interview of Robert I. Bouck

Summary of the Meeting

On April 30, 1996 Joan Zimmerman led a team of ARRB staffers who met with and interviewed Mr. Robert Bouck, former head of the PRS. Mr. Gunn kicked off the meeting and asked some preliminary questions, at which point he turned the chair over to Ms. Zimmerman. Ms. Zimmerman asked numerous questions about Secret Service records and filing systems, at which point she relinquished the floor to me for specific chain-of-custody questions relating to individual documents. This meeting report summarizes Mr. Bouck's initial answers to Jeremy Gunn's questions; the chain-of-custody questions I asked; and the answers provided by Mr. Bouck to my chain-of-custody questions. **It is not a verbatim transcript.** (However, the entire meeting was recorded on 2 audiotapes.) Ms. Zimmerman will summarize her interview in separate correspondence.

Summaries of Answers to Jeremy Gunn's preliminary questions:

Functions of PRS were to perform records searches on/for suspicious or threatening or dangerous individuals; to conduct room searches and building searches for overseas trips; security searches of airplanes; and security searches of incoming White House mail. He said that while physical security for individual domestic trips was a White House Detail function (not PRS), that sometimes on big overseas trips, he would personally precede the President on the press plane.

On the evening of the assassination, Mr. Bouck stated that he stayed in the office until about 2:00 A.M. before going home. Prior to going home, he said he received documents, doctor's notes and other records, and undeveloped photos following the end of the autopsy. He said the doctor's notes were handwritten, and were written on prepared forms; in response to detailed follow-on questions, he said these notes were much more than 2 or 3 pages, and constituted a "sheaf" of papers. He stated items of President Kennedy's clothing, such as the shirt, etc. were received at the same time as the autopsy materials. He said that the autopsy materials were received all at the same time, and included several little cans containing the brain and other biological materials. He said some of these cans or "round cannisters" had material which "sloshed" inside; two of the cannisters were about 4" X 5" or so in size, and that one might have been labeled as brain matter. He said that he had a four-drawer lock-file safe which was fireproof and had a combination lock on each drawer, and which normally did not have much inside of it, since most of the PRS files were not classified. He said that on the night of the assassination, he changed the combination on his safe and put all the materials brought to him following the autopsy in the top drawer. Bouck said that no one but he had the combination to the safe containing the autopsy materials and films. He said that the developing of all the films was done by Secret Service photographer James Fox, at his direction. Mr. Bouck stated he never opened any of the autopsy cannisters which contained biological materials, and initially said he never looked at any of the photographs, but then thought he remembered that Robert F. Kennedy may have asked to see them on one occasion. (The subject of who may have seen the autopsy photos was revisited later during my own questioning.) When asked by Mr. Gunn if he had any possible explanation for why some of the autopsy participants

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remembered the taking of photos which are not now in the collection, Mr. Bouck said he could think of no explanation for this.

In response to a direct question, Mr. Bouck said that he did not knowingly possess a bullet, nor did he ever see one, in connection with the JFK assassination.

Mr. Bouck said that he was not involved in the ensuing Secret Service investigation of the assassination, except that his office was responsible for reading and filing all of the voluminous incoming mail and reports regarding the assassination, most of which came from the FBI, and the remainder of which came from Secret Service field offices. He said that he could not personally keep up with all of this and do his regular duties, so an agent named Al Wong (phonetic spelling) was detailed to read, classify and file all of these incoming official reports. He said that Mr. Thomas Kelley, one of four Secret Service Inspectors, was responsible for the Secret Service's investigation of the assassination. (Toward the end of the interview Mr. Bouck stated that his personal opinion was that although Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin, he did feel that there was a conspiracy. Mr. Kelley had stated to him that there were many leads which were promising, but that they all eventually led to dead ends. He volunteered that since Mr. Behn, Mr. Rowley, and Mr. Kelley had all passed away, that Floyd Boring was the most promising person from that era for us to follow-up with, and he suggested that we do so.)

Jeremy Gunn recounted a story involving the opinion of a former CIA employee who had stated that President Kennedy was not very popular with many Secret Service agents, and asked Mr. Bouck to comment on that allegation. Mr. Bouck stated that he did not feel that was true, and that he personally thought JFK was the "most congenial" of all of the Presidents he had observed (which for Mr. Bouck began with FDR, and ended with LBJ). He said the only problem was that President Kennedy made it a bit hard for the Secret Service to protect him at times, since he insisted in riding in open-top cars, and did not want agents on the running boards. When Mr. Gunn asked whether it was normal for the head of the White House Detail to accompany the President on domestic trips, and if he knew why Mr. Behn did not travel on the Texas trip, Mr. Bouck said that yes, the Head of the White House Detail usually did travel on domestic trips, but that he thought Mr. Behn went on leave during the Texas trip. Mr. Bouck told Mr. Gunn that he was not aware of the Secret Service policy regarding people remaining on overpasses (above the motorcade route) or of the policy regarding open windows in buildings along the motorcade route, because those types of physical security issues were White House Detail responsibilities, not PRS.

During subsequent questioning by Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Bouck stated that he was given one copy of the Zapruder film and that he placed it in the same safe in which he held the autopsy materials, photographs and X-Rays, although he kept it in a separate drawer. He clarified when questioned later by me that he received only one copy of the Zapruder film, always accompanied it when it was removed from the safe, and that he probably viewed it about a dozen times in the company of other officials. He said he never loaned it out to anyone without accompanying it personally. He said he received the Zapruder film from Inspector Thomas Kelley, but that he was not aware of its original chain-of-custody. I asked him if he had received it the same night as the autopsy materials, and he emphatically stated that he definitely did not receive it that night, but "later." He could not remember how much later, but the two events were distinctly separate in his mind.

Summary of Doug Home's Questions and Mr. Bouck's Responses (NOT VERBATIM):

DOCUMENT: George G. Burkley memo for file dated 11/27/63 regarding receipt of bone fragments.

Q: Did you see the actual bone fragment referred to in the second paragraph of this memo?

A: No--it would have arrived in some kind of package.

Q: Who gave it to you?

A: I don't remember its chain-of-custody exactly; but I have a vague recollection that it came from Secret Service Chief Rowley.

Q: Are you aware of any measurements, photographs, or X-Rays of this fragment having been taken

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by anyone before you gave it to Admiral Burkley?

A: No.

DOCUMENT: Letter from Robert I. Bouck to CAPT J. H. Stover, dated December 5, 1963.

Q: In this letter you are recounting what was on CAPT Stover's receipt of November 22, 1963 regarding autopsy photographic film, and correcting errors (in extended quantity) where you found them. Did you make your count before developing, or after developing?

A: Before developing, definitely before developing.

Q: Please explain the statement "one holder loaded one side only" in item (a).

A: One of the duplex holders was half empty. They were pretty thick, and made of light colored wood, and I remember that one of them was blank on one side.

Q: Were there any scraps, or loose pieces of film, or film not in holders which you saw in the materials transferred to you, particularly any film which was represented to you as unexposed?

A: No, not to my knowledge. This letter represents a 100% inventory of everything that was handed to me that night. We sat down and counted everything the night it was transferred to me, and I was very meticulous about it because I knew it would have to be accounted for.

Q: The Sibert-O'Neill Report, dictated on November 26, 1963, lists 22 pieces of color film, whereas your letter to CAPT Stover lists 21 pieces. Can you think of anything which would account for the discrepancy between 22 and 21?

A: No.

DOCUMENTS: Burkley Inventory of Autopsy Films and Materials dated April 26, 1965; and HSCA Interview Report of September 6, 1977 Interview with Robert Bouck.

Q: Did you witness Dr. Burkley actually inventory the items on his inventory list, or did you just witness him sign the document?

A: I and 3 other people helped him inventory each item on that list, item by item, and it didn't go on that list unless we saw it and counted it.

Q: Who transferred the autopsy materials in your safe to Mrs. Lincoln at the Archives?

A: I believe it was just two of us, Dr. Burkley and myself.

Q: Did Mrs. Lincoln do a careful inventory of the materials before she signed, or not?

A: I don't think she counted anything--she didn't want anything to do with it, she was so upset about the assassination. She just signed the inventory because she trusted Dr. Burkley and took his word for it.

DOCUMENT: James Fox Statement of February 16, 1967 and "Joint Statement" about autopsy photography signed in February, 1967 by Bouck, Kelley, Kellerman, Duncan, and Fox.

Q: Were the materials given to you by Roy Kellerman early A.M. November 23, 1963 put in your safe immediately upon receipt, or only on November 27, 1963 when first stated in this joint statement?

A: Immediately upon receipt; I remember staying at the office for that purpose, and changing my combination lock that night for just that purpose.

Q: Who asked SA Fox to make the black and white prints at the Secret Service lab?

A: I did--that would have been me. Fox would never have done anything like that on his own without my permission. I gave him his instructions on all the autopsy photography. I remember that they said they wanted them done, and I then gave him his orders.

Q: Do you know why Fox went to the Navy Photographic Center at Anacostia to develop the pictures instead of taking them back to Bethesda where autopsy photography was normally done by the photographer who took the pictures?

A: I'm pretty sure Dr. Burkley was the one who asked for the photos and that he suggested Anacostia, and may even have made the preliminary arrangements, and then I may have called to confirm the arrangements. Yes, it was Burkley I believe. We didn't use Bethesda because Burkley would have suggested the Navy lab at Anacostia.

DOCUMENT: Treasury Department Receipt (unsigned) dated November 26, 1963 from Robert I. Bouck acknowledging receipt from Dr. George Burkley on November 26, 1963 for various items. file number CO-2-34030 (CD 371).

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Q: Do you remember this document?

A: Vaguely; I remember some of the subjects typed on it, such as "one piece of bronze material broken from a casket," and I think I typed it, but I do not remember seeing any of these items themselves.

Q: You never saw, for example, the "surgical drapes and shroud used to cover the body in transit?"

A: I don't think I actually saw any of these materials, I only remember some of the subjects, and I am pretty certain I typed it.

Q: Do you remember signing it?

A: Well, I didn't sign it, obviously, because this one isn't signed.

Q: Do you think that the medical statements from Texas listed here, and the various copies of the autopsy report, and autopsy notes listed here, could be the "sheaf" of notes and papers which you mentioned earlier in the interview as having received on the night of the autopsy? Could those papers actually have been these on this receipt dated November 26?

A: Yes, they could have been; it might be these I was referring to earlier. I thought I had received autopsy materials on only one occasion, but now I seem to remember two occasions, and I guess this was it. But other than some of the subjects on this page, my recollection of this document is quite vague. It was just too long ago.

DOCUMENT: HSCA Interview Report of Robert Bouck Interview of September 6, 1977.

Q: In this interview report you mention a Warren Commission staffer, or the Chief Counsel looking at the autopsy photographs. Do you remember that?

A: Yes, now I do. It was one person. Earlier I said it was Robert Kennedy, but now I think that was wrong--it was a Warren Commission attorney.

Q: Was it one of these two men (Bouck was shown photos of Mr. Rankin and Mr. Specter, circa 1964)?

A: I don't remember--it was too long ago. Both of these men look familiar, but I don't remember where I know them from. I can't remember who saw the photos.

DOCUMENT: CIA Document 450 (undated NPIC Analysis of Zapruder Film).

Q: Have you ever seen this document?

A: Definitely not.

Q: Are you aware of any Secret Service request for a CIA analysis of the Zapruder film?

A: No, I never heard of any such thing.

Q: Did you ever loan your copy of the Zapruder film to the CIA at NPIC?

A: No.

Final Question from Mr. Horne: Did you ever hear the President personally say that he didn't want agents to stand on the running boards on his car, or did you hear that from other agents?

Answer: I never heard the President say that personally. I heard it from other agents. END

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