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Subject: Final Comments on Autopsy Photo Issues
Upon further review of the military inventory dated 11/1/66, it is clear to me that the description of photos 17, 18, 44 and 45 in that document leave no room for ambiguity or alternate interpretations regarding what is being depicted in the photographs. Specifically, for photo #s 17 and 18: "missile wound over entrance in posterior skull, following reflection of the scalp"; and for photos 44 and 45: "missile wound in posterior skull with scalp reflected." Since the scalp is only on the exterior of the skull, it seems inescapable that what is being described is not only the back of the skull, but the outside (exterior) of the back of the skull. As explained below, the Clark Panel and the HSCA took a position that these same photographs depict the inside of the back of the skull, and as viewed through the camera's lens positioned, quoting the Clark Panel, "from above and in front." In my opinion this description is deficient, and cannot be correct, for two reasons: (1) It ignores the key words "with scalp reflected" for photographs 17, 18, 44 and 45, which is an unambiguous indicator that it is the exterior of the skull being viewed, since there is obviously no scalp on the inside of the skull; (2) When viewed, photo #17 certainly seems to show a convex surface (which is consistent with viewing the back of the skull from the outside), and reflected scalp can also be seen. If this was a photograph of the inside of the back of the skull, it would be a concave surface, and there would be no reflected scalp present in the photograph. It seems of great importance to me that in the paragraph where the prosecutors described the beveling of a semi-circular exit wound in these same photos (17, 18, 44 and 45) in their January 26, 1967 "Military Review" report, they never once described where in the head the bullet exited; that is, the Exit paragraph on page 4 of the Military Review never says in what region of the head the beveled semi-circular crater was found. To obtain that information, one must marry the Exit paragraph in the 1/26/67 Military Review with the description of photos 17, 18, 44 and 45 in the 11/1/66 Military Inventory, made one and one-half months earlier by the same people. To be sure, when one does marry the two pieces of information in those two reports, the conclusion one is led to is of an exit wound in the posterior skull. This confusing conclusion supports Humes' sworn statement to Allen Dulles in 1964 that scientifically, the shot to the head could only have entered from behind, and also could only have exited from behind. As a result of the above analysis, I am more convinced than ever that the Clark Panel and HSCA re-interpretation of these key photographs is incorrect. In support of the Military Inventory description of 11/1/66, Parkland Dr. Robert McClelland told journalist Anthony Summers in 1989 that when he viewed the autopsy materials in the Archives in 1988, there were photos present showing the wound in the back of the head with the scalp reflected, so that one could see the large extent of the same wound he saw in Parkland Hospital in November, 1963.
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recstat: Record
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