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Subject: JFK Autopsy Photography
MEETING REPORT DOCUMENT 3 AUTHOR: DOUGLAS HORNE/ARRB Date Created: 05/13/96 Meeting Logistics Date: 05/10/96
Agecny Name: Witnesses/Consultants Attendees: Gloria Knudsen and Children Terri and Bob, Jeremy Gunn, Tim Wray, Dave Montague, and Doug Horne
Topic: JFK Autopsy Photography
Summary of the Meeting
The surviving wife and two of the four children of official White House photographer Robert L. Knudsen (part-time from 1946-1953, and full-time from 1958-1974) met with ARRB staff at their own request to inform us of recollections passed to them by their father before he died in January 1989. The meeting was audiotaped-- duration of recording is one 90-minute cassette, and about 10-15 minutes of cassette number 2. All 3 family members recounted that Mr. Knudsen had told them he photographed the autopsy of President Kennedy, and was the only one to do so. All statements henceforth recorded in this meeting report represent summaries of what family members attributed to their father. After dressing in a civilian business suit (normal procedure even though he was a Navy Chief Petty Officer), he reported to the White House for duty on November 22, 1963, and was subsequently directed to meet Air Force One at Andrews AFB and accompany the body of the President to Bethesda. His daughter Terri said her father called in to the White House to ask for instructions before going in; his wife, Gloria, said that he received a call at home from the Secret Service telling him to go in to work. All family members agreed that he had met Air Force One at Andrews, accompanied the official motorcade to Bethesda, and had photographed the autopsy of President Kennedy. He had told them it was the hardest thing he had ever had to do in his life, in the emotional sense, since he reportedly had a brotherly relationship with President Kennedy. All 3 family members said that they did not see their father for 3 days after he left the house (i.e., until after the funeral on November 25, 1963), with the exception of Saturday, November 23, 1963 when they were allowed to view the casket lying in state in the East Room of the White House, where Mr. Knudsen was working that day. His son, Bob, said he thought his father had ridden in the last car in the motorcade with some Secret Service agents from Andrews to Bethesda, and had entered Bethesda through the back door at the loading dock; he was present and began working at "set up" for the autopsy. Mr. Knudsen had recounted to family members the following substantive remarks:-he witnessed and photographed probes inserted in the President's body which left no doubt of the number and direction of bullet trajectories; son Bob thought that his father had described 3 probes in the body (2 in the thorax/neck, and one in the head);-although none of the family remembers any discussion of type of camera, film, format of film, or number of pictures taken, they all claimed their father told them that he was the only one in the morgue with a camera, and believed he was the only person to photograph the autopsy;-the Secret Service
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