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Subject: Participation in JFK Autopsy
MEETING REPORT DOCUMENT'S AUTHOR: DOUGLAS HORNE/ARRB Date Created: 05/21/96 Meeting Logistics Date: 05/21/96
Agecny Name: Witnesses/ConsultantsAttendees: Dr. Robert F. Karnei, Jr., Jeremy Gunn, Tim Wray, and Doug HorneTopic: Participation in JFK AutopsySummary of the Meeting Dr. Karnei met with ARRB staff at our request, for an initial assessment interview. This is a summary only (not verbatim) of the significant statements made by him in response to ARRB questions during the interview, which lasted from approximately 1:15-3:20 P.M. on Tuesday, May 21, 1996.
Professional Career: Dr. Karnei said that he was stationed at Bethesda from September of 1962 through September of 1966. He said that he returned there in 1972 to become Head of Anatomical Pathology. When he retired from the Navy in 1991, he said that he was then serving as Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP). At the time of the Kennedy assassination, he said that he was 29 years old, and a Navy Lieutenant.Dr. Karnei was a second year resident at the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda when President Kennedy was assassinated; he had already completed his first year of residency, which was in pathology. His second year of residency, which was in surgery, was already underway. He was "on duty" the day of the assassination, which meant that any autopsy which was necessitated after hours would have been his to perform, under normal conditions. However, in this case, Dr. Karnei said that a decision was made by higher-ups (perhaps CAPT Stover, or perhaps even Admiral Kenney, he did not know) to use staff pathologists for President Kennedy's autopsy, not residents in training. He said he was notified about 5:30 P.M. by CAPT Stover that Drs. Humes and Boswell would be performing the autopsy. He said he was assigned (and performed) miscellaneous duties, such as arranging security with the Marine guards; providing office space for, and coordinating security arrangements with, the Commanding General of MDW and his aides; escorting VIP visitors up to the tower suite where Mrs. Kennedy was staying during the autopsy; obtaining food for the military security guards and FBI/S.S. agents; and most important, trying to control who was and was not admitted into the morgue during the autopsy. Dr. Karnei checked the I.D.s of several people during the evening as people entered, or tried to enter, the morgue. He also left the morgue several times to perform other duties, and subsequently did not have total control over morgue access.When asked by ARRB, Dr. Karnei said he did not witness the arrival of the President's body at the loading dock, or its entrance into the morgue, so could not answer any questions regarding the type or color of the ambulance, nor could he through first-hand observation tell us when the body arrived.However, he did remember seeing a silver-colored casket early in the evening, in the cold room (the anteroom containing the chill boxes) next to the morgue. He said he even sat next to it part of the evening. (Later in the Record

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