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Subject: Initial conversation w/ Leland Benson re: JFK's tissue specimens
CALL REPORT ISSUE # 43 DOCUMENT 5 AUTHOR: Dave Montague/ARRB Date Created: 07/25/96WHO initiated the call? Review Board's representative in the call: Dave MontagueSubject: Initial conversation w/Leland Benson re: JFK's tissue specimensDescription of the Call Medical Project I found Benson living in Florida, spoke with both he & his son, then confirmed he's the sameBenson who was the Supervisor of Histopathology at Bethesda in 1963. I identified myself & explained the nature of the Review Board. After my explanation, he acknowledged that he realized he could speak without concern about the oath of secrecy he was once held to. He told me he was surprised to hear from anyone re: "this whole thing" & that he hasn't spoken to any gov'n't person, researcher or reporter in well over 10 years.I asked questions of Benson in order to detail his role at Bethesda during 1963 & any JFK related information. During our conversation, he said the following:-he was the supervisor of the Histopathology Lab & the Morgue at Bethesda, but remembers it being called the Medical School at that time-Dr. Boswell was Benson's supervisor at that time & told all the staff that they couldn't say anything to anyone about JFK related information without first talking to the Public Affairs Office-he thinks Chief Boyer was at the autopsy & he was an assistant supervisor at that time-he was NOT present during the autopsy, but was called in the day after the assassination (Saturday) in order to work on JFK's tissue specimens-during the tissue work, there were about 3-4 technicians from his lab present; he remembers for certain that doctors Humes & Boswell were present & maybe some other pathologists as well; 1 government agent (wearing a suit) was present & he feels this person was either with the CIA or with Naval Intelligence; he felt the man could not have been with the Secret Service or the FBI because (from past experience) they were usually polite & identified themselves; this person was "just there"-he doesn't remember a photographer being present during the tissue examination-the specimens were brought in the night before & his first time seeing the specimens was when they came out of paraffin-he remembers the specimens were in glass containers (similar to Mason Jars) & had identification labels on them with a case number-he doesn't recall the specific case number anymore, but does recall the format would be "A" for autopsy, "63" for the year & then the rest of the case number-"We worked on specimens all weekend, then made slides which were stained and then the gross containers (made up of all this material) were given to Dr. Humes."-he doesn't know what happened to material after it was given to Dr. Humes-"In all, there must've been over 100 specimens of the lung, spleen, brain, etc..."-he doesn't think he worked on brain specimens that weekend because the brain had to be set in formula first, for at least a few days, but he believes it was done later; he'll probably remember more later about that by his next contact with us-he doesn't know if photographs were ever made of the

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