

Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, Director
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3/22/87

Dear Cyril,

Much as I would like to be able to accept your invitation to participate in your symposium this coming December it is physically impossible for me. I regret this in particular because Pitt's political science department will be involved, because that seems to me to be an excellent idea, combining that with the legal medicine aspects, and because I think I might be able to contribute to that part also.

Not only can I not drive very far, even riding exhausts me. Every six weeks I am driven for about an hour to see Dr. Hufnagel in Washington and although I get out and walk a bit going and coming that trip knocks me out. I have no idea how I might be able to take air travel but just getting to the airport presents a major problem to me and I fear that, the plane ride and the ride from the airport would be too much. Because I can't stand and can't sit for very long with my legs down all of this would be aggravated.

Since getting your letter I've been trying to think of how I might be able to contribute something of significance in the legal medicine area and perhaps by videotape I might. I might be able to get this done by local Wood College or, if one of your people were to be here, rather near here - and driving to Washington from Pittsburgh puts one only about 10 minutes away - I could be interviewed or questioned.

What I have in mind was avoided by the House assassins committee, although it was well aware, and it has two parts, each in a sense a good followup on your excellent appeal to those finks on the Hill.

You may remember that when you were coroner and I got an original FBI picture of the front of JFK's shirt from the Department of Justice, I sent you a print. You gave it to the criminalist on your staff and he did little with it, as I recall saying only that such slits in the collar could not have been caused by a projectile moving faster than 1,000 feet per second. You told me then that you then were too busy to do more. (I'd hoped to use you as a witness in an FOIA suit in ^{which} that was relevant.) First let me tell ^{you} about that picture, although you should have a copy still. The FBI took that picture with the button and buttonhole in line. The custom-made shirt had a three-line pattern that appeared as a single line in the pictures the FBI took for and gave to the commission. In this quite clear picture it is obvious that the two slits - and they definitely are not bullet holes, do not coincide in any way as it would appear they would have to if caused by a bullet when the shirt collar was buttoned, as JFK's was. One is longer than the other and one is higher up on the collarband than the other. This difference appears to be material with respect to both differences, materially higher and materially longer.

I checked the commission's testimony and found that with Specter conducting the questioning before the commission he avoided all of this and the question that Allen Dulles then asked of Dr. Charles Carrico, the only physician to see JFK before his clothing was altered and treatment was begun. Dulles asked Carrico where the bullet hole in the front of JFK's neck was. Carrico, instead of speaking his answer, pointed to above his shirt collar! Dulles told him that words were necessary for the reporter and the record, and is it correct that he is saying that this wound was above the collar. Carrico testified that that is what he was saying and showing. I think Dulles returned to this. Later I interviewed Carrico in Dallas and he not only confirmed this, he added detail that I believe you will recognize as standard.

Carrico told me that it is standard procedure for the tie to be cut off if time is pressing and that the nurses did this under his direction while he unbuttoned the short front and put a stethoscope in and on the chest. He showed me by holding his own tie how it is held as much away from the body as possible and then is cut as close to the knot as possible with a scalpel. I then checked the nurse testimony and found that once again Specter was diligent in avoiding the obvious questions and this time no member made the Dulles mistake. The nurses testified that they immediately went to work on JFK's clothing in the usual or prescribed manner or procedure. The exact words are readily available. I believe the nurses were Bowron and Stanchcliffe.

With this clear picture I tried to go farther. I filed an FOIA suit to compel the Archives to take pictures to my description for me and they were ordered to take the pictures and let me examine them but not to give me copies. Only they didn't and when I wrote the judge they finally told me to come in. When I got there they said, oh, so sorry, we learned something and wrote you that we can't take a picture of the knot because the tie is unknotted. They were unable to explain how this happened because the tie was knotted when used as evidence before the Commission. Incompetent as are the pictures the FBI gave the commission, it is obvious that the only damage to the ^{knotted} tie is at the extreme upper left-hand edge as worn - and this also does not come close to where the slits in the shirt collarband are. So, it is obvious that even this nick could not have been caused by any bullet if a bullet had caused those two different slits. It turns out that for purposes of its own report, CD1, the FBI had untied the knot and twisted that part of the tie to make it appear that there was a hole dead-center of the knot. It then put the knot together again for use before the Commission. And, after it was unknotted several years later ^{when} I was to have pictures made of it by court order, it was unknotted again and then, lo and behold, when it was of interest to the House committee and theoretically under lock and key in the archives, the knot suffered some skilled magic and it was reknotted for your panel. Your chairman, the guy from New York, confirmed this to me.

As you may have heard, the first law of the FBI is to cover its ass and the second is to cover your own ass. Well, in the suit in which I'd hoped to use you as an expert witness, after long delay and a trip to the appeals court, I did get to depose several by then retired FBI agents, including Robert Brazier. We showed him an enlargement of the picture like the one I sent you and because the suit was for the records of the results of tests, asked him about that picture. He in part ducked it and in part confirmed the obvious that I report above. He testified under oath, as I recall now at least twice, that he had that question and directed that Paul Stombaugh, the hair and fibres expert, examine and report on the damages to the front of the shirt and the tie. Only allegedly no such report exists and none was produced. The reason is obvious - they can't produce any such report without destroying both the entire official solution and their own and the commission's integrity.

Please take another look at the picture this time do not depend on someone who either doesn't care or doesn't want to tangle with the FBI. You will see that no expertise is required to perceive that the slits could not have been caused by any bullet with the collar buttoned. Or, you can use an expert out there. But I think that because this attracted no attention when I used it more than a decade ago, in the context of your program it may well get attention and cause the well justified sensation. It is the total destruction of the case that could have ensued if your plea had been heeded, which would have been the opposite of what that creature Blakey wanted. And, going along with this, I primed a reported to question Vincent Guinn out of the committee's hearing. He admitted that the specimens of bullet fragment he tested do not meet their official descriptions. So, on that basis alone his testimony is at least questionable.

I'd tried long ago to get the Archives~~to~~ to weigh Ex 399 for me and it refused. I questioned Frazier on deposition and he swore that he had weighed it only once, when he got it. He never weighed any of the specimens^{stand} and he admitted to what he did not testify before the commission, that he cut more than what extruded from the base for lead alloy testing. You can see a cone cut into the bullet so he took all that extruded plus this additional amount when all he needed for spectrography was a minuscule amount, no larger than a millimeter. So, if you pay close attention to ~~what~~ Guinn testified to, the remarkable likeness in the results he got in the tests he made, it is at least not unreasonable to ask if what he was given to test~~is~~ is not what was recovered from Connally and the car but what the FBI without need removed from 399. I have a news story on Guinn being questioned and a tape of poor quality but clear enough.

I think that what I have in mind would be particularly effective if you were to use a videotape of all or part of your excellent but wasted appeal to those finks in the Congress and, although I have not thought this part through, I think that if there is any chance that you would be near here before then, that it would be very good if you and I were to make the videotape together. If carrying that equipment were to be a problem, if we knew in advance I believe that Hood, which has it and people who are experienced in using it, would cooperate.

I have a copy of the Frazier deposition in which he says he directed the Stombaugh study and no such thing was produced. We could use xeroxes of the pages of the commission testimony or the books, the former being easier to handle. And you ought have no trouble, if it is not within your experience, to get medical experts to confirm Carrico and the nurses on the standard emergency procedures - the practise of cutting the tie off. With this as background, please look at the tie picture as published by the commission. You can see a cut up and a cut down against the knot. There just is no other way those slits could have been made in the collarband and the edge of the tie knot. And there is the unrefuted testimony by Carrico that the wound was above the shirt collar.

Done properly this could be a major sensation and a real breakthrough.

If you want to do ~~this~~ without me I have no objections at all and will help in any way I can. However, from my own reporting past, I think it would be both more effective and more dramatic if I did it of first-person knowledge, with more detail if you and/or Professor Windt would like more detail.

You also are welcome to copies of anything I have and to access to the enormity of records I've obtained, all preserved exactly as I received them. If Professor Windt would like to discuss the polysci aspects I see or he is interested in, of course, in person or by phone. I'm generally home from my daily physical therapy by ~~10~~ 10:30 a.m. and unless we have medical appointments or errands am generally home for the rest of the day.

In any event, I think that what you have in mind is worthwhile and I wish you both well in it.

I've not accepted your invitation to phone you because I avoid toll calls. We have no real nest egg and my Social Security is only \$370 a month. If any of this is not clear, please let me know. I think that with the sponsorship you would be providing this could be a very significant thing, and very worthwhile.

*Spectro on collar & tie negative
no metallic traces*

ALL the best



Harold Weisberg