

1. Response to Todd Vaughan

I have already noted that I had made a mistake when I had the bullet going into Connally's left wrist when clearly it was his right. Mea culpa. Mea culpa.

Now he takes me to task on the matter of the location of the small hole in JFK's anterior neck. He asks: "So exactly where does Dr. Carrico say that the wound was 'above the collar line.'" Just to clarify it is McKnight who attributes to Carrico that the wound is above the collar line. I am not putting words into Carrico's mouth as Vaughan seems to imply as he sets them up inside quotation marks. This is based on Carrico's response to a query from Dulles as to where the wound was located. According to Dulles, Carrico put his "hand right above where your tie is? What that says to me is that the anterior neck wound was above the collar line. Vaughan can cut it anyway he wants to fit his predispositions but to me Carrico's meaning is clear.

It is too bad Specter didn't ask Carrico to specify: Do you mean above the collar line or did the bullet exit through the collar and damage the tie? Or some variation to bring essential clarity to this critical issue. After all, Specter was a Philadelphia lawyer and an assistant district attorney in that city when he was appointed to the Commission. He knew his way around a courtroom and how to question witnesses. He had to realize that Carrico's testimony on this matter was absolutely crucial to the Commission's contention (actually the official case against Oswald as the lone assassin) that all the shots came from the rear of the presidential limousine and that one bullet hit both JFK and Connally. In this regard, if there was ever a key witness in the government's case Carrico certainly was that witness. He was the only trained medical witness to observe the position of the President's neck wound in relationship to his collar line and tie before the emergency room nurses removed JFK's clothes. Why did Specter fail so woefully in not following up on Dulles' questions to get Carrico to go on record in plain English with the exact location of Kennedy's anterior neck wound—was it above the shirt or did a missile go through the collar and nick the tie. One can only wonder if the issue would ever have come up at all if Dulles had not introduced it.

(Parenthetically, Specter passed up on another opportunity to perhaps bring some essential closure on this key issue when he questioned emergency room nurse Margaret Henchcliffe*. Specter asked her when she *first saw* the President, "Did you see any wound anywhere on his body?" Henchcliffe recalled JFK's massive head wound and "just a little hole in the middle of his neck." Specter could have asked (taking his prompt from Dulles, if he was keen to know) whether she saw this wound before she and nurse Bowron used scalpels to remove his clothes and, if so, was the wound above or through his collar line. Needless to say Specter did not go there.)

* For Henchcliffe see 6H 141)

Minute
of
avoidance



Be
sure to
review
the
entire
Specter/
Carrico
exchange

I did not add to my argument that Harold Weisberg interviewed both Carrico and Perry at Parkland Hospital on 12/1/1971. His notes on the conversation that Carrico acknowledged that he was talking about a scalpel when he told Specter "... I proceeded with the examination and the nurses removed his clothing in the usual procedure." (3H 358) Nurse Diane Bowron told Specter "... Miss Henchcliffe and I cut off his clothing." (6H 136) The instrument used was a scalpel Carrico told Weisberg. The record of this conversation can be found in the Weisberg Subject Index File under "Dr. Carrico," items 02 and 03.

I would just point out to Vaughan who took me to task on endnote 11 when I faulted Specter for not asking the emergency room nurses whether they used scalpels or scissors in cutting off JFK's clothes. I did not include Bowron's statement in the piece on Bugliosi. That was my own oversight. I add it now just to keep the record accurate. I added scalpels because of Carrico's confirmation that scalpels were used in his 1971 conversation with Weisberg.

When Kennedy was wheeled into Trauma Room One Carrico was the first doctor to examine the patient. JFK had a heartbeat, no palpable pulse, and his respiration spasmodic; in fact, he was moribund. Whatever relief was possible speed was essential and a sharp scalpel in the hands of a trained emergency room nurse like Henchcliffe was used to remove his coat, shirt, and tie.

The Weisberg archive is open to any one with an interest. Vaughan is free to access Weisberg's conversations with Carrico and Perry. If he provides Rex an address I'll mail him Weisberg's notes on his 12/1971 conversation with Carrico.

Two other points: Vaughan contends that JFK autopsy photos clearly shows that the tracheotomy incision was located at a point of JFK's anterior neck that corresponds exactly with the holes in the collar and the nick in the tie. To my mind this assertion has only a loose relationship with the facts. In these ghastly state-of-death photos Kennedy is naked, at least from the waist up, and his head rests in a brace of sorts that slightly elevates the head and seems to stretch his neck. The point is that it is hasty and overbold to make any definitive statement that the wound in his throat in these photos corresponds with the slits or holes and the nick in his tie. The inarguable fact is that Dr. Carrico is the only trained medical observer who saw the anterior neck wound in relationship to JFK's shirt collar and tie and then only when the body was in a prone position.

Finally, Vaughan cites Dr. David Mantik who reported that he had occasion to examine JFK's shirt collar and found that "the slits aligned perfectly." He couples this confirmation with the exact same observation made by FBI Agent Robert Frazier. He neglects, of course, to explain why the FBI hair and fiber expert Paul M. Stombaugh was never asked about the Kennedy shirt collar. I make it clear

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that Frazier ordered Stombaugh to test to determine whether the slits coincided and if the fibers around the holes were pointing inward or outward but that report is not in the Warren report or the 26 volumes. The Commission never asked Stombaugh about the results of the tests when he appeared as a witness.

Why didn't the Commission include a picture of Kennedy's collar to support its single-bullet construction? It included pictures of the President's shirt, tie, and coat.

FBI tests revealed that the holes in Kennedy's coat and shirt showed traces of copper around the edges of the holes. The bullet (CE# 399) that the Commission contended entered Kennedy's back, exited his neck and caused all of Connally's nonfatal wounds was copper jacketed. A forensic ballistic report showing that spectrographic analysis of the copper jacket metal from CE# 399 and the copper wipe or traces around the coat and shirt were determined to have a common origin would have provided the government with the "killer facts" to proclaim that the single-bullet explanation was an established fact and not a theory.

There never was such a report.

The absence of this kind of supporting material leads to a conclusion that is as inconspicuous as a tarantula on an Angel food cake: The single-bullet theory is inconsistent with the physical evidence.

By way of postscript: Dr. Mantik emailed Gary Aguilar on 6/12/2007 and noted confirmed that the "holes in JFK's shirt aligned perfectly" but the holes "looked more like a scalpel incision though than a bullet hole." I would invite anyone interested to take a look at a clear FBI photo of the Kennedy shirt collar and whether the slits do coincide. There is a pretty clear photo in Harold Weisberg's *PostMortem* on p. 598

Rex,

If not too much trouble could you add to end note 11 in the Bugliosi piece the following:

Carrico noted that the nurses removed JFK's clothes "in the usual procedure." Carrico (3H 358). Bowron told Specter that she and Henchcliffe "cut off his clothing." See 6H136.

Jerry McKnight