

-confidential-

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MARCH 2, 1971

Dear Sylvia,.

Thanks for your letter of January 22nd. I am just now getting back on my feet after a bout with penumonia and then a reaction to the penicillin which caused me to break out in red welts all over and to itch like hell. The same feeling I get whenever David Lifton calls me - like last week.

First, he called my friend Dennis Roy and tells Dennis all of the information he wants to communicate to me. Then Dennis calls me and repeats what David told him. David then feels that I will rush to the phone and call him to get more of his juicy information. I didn't call David and haven't since we made our agreement to cut him off.

When I didn't call, the next day "Yenta" Lifton called and using his best party manners inquired as to what I thought of his latest exploits. (He had just returned from a trip to New York and Washington.)

I acted very cold and dis-interested and wound up yelling at him again and getting myself all excited when it's really not worth the trouble.

It seems that the jerk had spent \$40.00 in phone calls tracking down a rumor he had heard about my work -- a rumor he heard from Mary and Jim Ferrell.

Jim told Mary who told David that I had completed 300 pages of a manuscript on the case and was about to scoop him.

I think Mary was just putting David on and trying to "goose him" to get his thing together fast. Jim Ferrell was at our house for a weekend and did see a monograph of perhaps 25 pages - a very rough draft - and this thing then escalated into a 300 page manuscript by the time David heard about it.

I am kind of put out with Mary for talking to David. But I realize that David is an expert at wesselling information out of people. He sits around all day dreaming up these ploys and is very good at this game. This is exactly why he got as far as he did in his research. Even so, I consider him to be without scruples -- a greedy, self-centered, ego-tistical, scatter-brained brilliant researcher.

*Call to Fred
3/9/71 re
April 1965 agreement
notes, type
etc*

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David was importuning me to do some art work for his book. I told him very loudly that since he would not keep his word with me and broke our agreement about sharing information gained by the group effort at Life Magazine, that I did not want to have anything to do with him.

Anyway, yesterday, or rather last night Dennis Roy talked to David for five hours during which time David spilled to Dennis what the core of his research is about. David did this because he was dying to find out just exactly what Dennis, and particularly I, had been working on. He has to know what other researchers are doing to be sure they don't scoop him and thereby ruin his investment. (He constantly talks about his book as if it were a piece of real estate.)

According to Dennis, David's research centers on the JFK autopsy -- just as I had guessed earlier and told you - on the phone I think.

David spotted that line in CD7:283 - the Sibert and O'Neill report where these two agents are describing the body as it was removed from the casket at Bethesda. This was the basis for that memo I sent you in August.

The agents wrote: "Following the removal of the wrapping, it was ascertained that the President's clothing had been removed and it was also apparent that a tracheotomy had been preformed, as well as surgery of the head area, namely, in the top of the skull."

David spotted this a few years back, I think late '66 or early '67 and set about checking this out.

He called Commander Humes and said he was a member of Wesley J. Leibler's class at UCLA -- the class had as its purpose a critical review of the critics, to answer Lane's book, etc -- a good cover, if you want to approach a man in Humes position.

David turned to the Sibert and O'Neill report and grilled Humes regarding this "surgery to the top of the head." Humes hung up. David called back and Humes's wife answered and told David that her husband "just ran out the door." David then finally got Humes again at his office and this time really pinned him down. David taped all of this.

David also interviewed - telephonically - Dr. Boswell who admitted the Sibert/O'Neill report was correct. He also interviewed one or both of these agents, plus a couple of the Parkland doctors.

Armed with a collection of these tapes and the Siebert/O'Neill report David called Leibler over to his apartment and layed this information on him. Leibler blew his stack and stormed about the place yelling and screaming at those dirty SOB's, etc -- all the time David had rigged the place for sound and all of this is on tape.

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Leibler promptly wrote a 17 page memo on this and fired it off to the members of the Commission.

David hopped a plane and went around to these members and got their reaction to the Leibler memo -- again using the legitimate excuse that he was a member of Professor Leibler's class. David did not tell Leibler he had done this.

Leibler flew east to do the same thing, only by the time Leibler got there no one would talk to him.

David then filched this 17 page memo from Leibler's file and is planning to run it in his book.

The significance of this wound alteration is this: if the doctors at Bethesda had been confronted with the body in the same condition it had been at Parkland -- when the Parkland doctors saw it -- then they would have had no choice but to say he was shot from the front.

There was a hole in the hair line in either the right or left temple (I lean towards the left temple myself) and the back of his head was missing.

A clandestine operation, unknown to Humes and Boswell was performed. (David thinks Bethesda, I think Parkland.)

The top of the head was removed and a hole was punched in the back.

This made the relatively clear cut wound pattern rather ambiguous and gave the Bethesda doctors an "out". Films showed the President to be facing forward when hit. Entrance hole in the temple and exit the back of the head means shot ^{PROBABLY} fired from overpass or front seat.

That would be unacceptable. Besides, the cover story had fully developed in Dallas by the time of the autopsy -- and an assassin had been arrested and three shells found in a building and the rifle, etc., etc., etc., etc.

Remember what the SS man said to Jean Hill at the Sheriff's Department shortly after the assassination -- "we have three wounds and three shells and that's all (3 shots) we are willing to say right now." How does he know how many wounds at this point?

Someone impressed Humes with this I'm sure, as he even quotes Bob Jackson's eyewitness account of the assassination in his autopsy report -- of all things to mention in an autopsy.

The evidence that was developed or planted in Dallas contradicted the pattern of wounds on the body. In a case of this magnitude and presented with a body with its wounds altered, the doctors were forced to accept the scenario. To choose otherwise would be to cause unbelievable chaos.

Sorry to write such a dreary letter. Perhaps next time I could tell you about our earthquake.

Peace,


FRED

P.S. I am attempting to do a study of the coverage of the assassination by the wire services and am interested in getting duplicates of the actual, timekeyed, wire service copy, but am having trouble locating this. I know hundreds of people who were near a ticker that day kept this stuff as a souvenirs but so far haven't found anyone~~xx~~. Could you help me here?

I am interested in the first hour of this copy and all I actually have is bits and pieces as published in FOUR DAYS and THE DAY KENNEDY WAS SHOT.

P.S. #2

If all this goulish evidence tampering went on -- and I suspect that it did - then who will ever believe this? Even if David has all these people on tape admitting that the body was "damaged in transit" before the autopsy x-rays and photos were taken then what respectable publisher would put his name on a story as bizarre as this?

Arnoni once wrote "Any fabrication involved in such evidence (in this case) may have been so through as to render it indisernible". Quite.

It may be that the Kennedy library has catalogued all of this material for posterity -- that much time must pass before this full story can be told. Who do I sound like now?

Sometimes, I think this country deserves what it gets. Maybe John Kennedy was too good for us and someone like Nixon or Humphhey or LBJ are more in keeping with our ethics, traditions and national goals.