

23 Oct 70

Dear Harold (cc Hoch):

Weisberg asked me whether same type of bullet which caused JFK's head wound have caused the front-neck wound.

I write this quickly in response to a part of your 13 Oct letter to Paul and me, the paragraph beginning ~~XXXXXX~~ "Bottom-- if only...", relative to fragments in the neck.

We do not know for sure whether JFK was hit in the neck by a bullet of the same type as the one that hit in the front-right part of the head. I think, however, that that is the case-- at least the condition of the neck wound and the character of the fragments in the ~~XXXXXX~~ neck are not at all inconsistent with the same type of bullet having struck in both places.

Without describing basis of my belief here, let me tell what I think we need (I am almost certain of this): small, light-weight, very swift, frangible bullet entered the front-neck and produced characteristic small, round entrance hole. The bullet crushed against the right side of the trachea and tore the trachea (the force of this crushing or the force subsequently produced by the impact caused the trachea slightly to the left). When the bullet struck the trachea it burst into tiny pieces which caused great damage in the area just behind the trachea (remember the description of two of the ~~XXXXXX~~ Ireland does who said there was a "great amount" of contusion and hematoma to the right of the trachea. There must have been great damage also behind the spot which was visible to them-- they saw only a part in of the damage). Fragments of the spent bullet were just into and a bit to east in the area behind the trachea. I cannot guess depth of penetration, since there are parts of the body of very different consistency in that area, soft and hard. I could guess that X-rays would show fragments that are (as the ~~XXXXXX~~ says) "several" and "small"-- with perhaps a few discernibly larger fragments represented by parts of the bullet's jacket that may have been torn apart (the jacket would not fragment in the same way as lead, but that would not be visible in X-rays, since they would be one-dimensional and a line).

There is nothing in the ~~XXXXXX~~ description of the fragments ("several small fragments") or the Ireland Does' description of the internal damage ("great contusion and hematoma to the right of-- and much also behind-- the trachea") which is not perfectly with what I say above-- no contradiction whatever, but rather all that one would ~~XXXXXX~~ expect if he believed JFK had been hit in the front-neck by small, light, fast, frangible bullet. One could not anticipate anything else, for this is the normal outcome in such a wounding.

I mentioned before to Harold and now recall the ~~XXXXXX~~ doc's (I forget which one) description of the fragments in correspondence to Howard makes no sense, no matter what firing conditions you suppose, and cannot possibly be true. That doc lied to Howard, and his reason for lying is clear, too.

His description of the size of the fragments, and the exceedingly small area that they occupy, necessarily implies that if the bullet entered from the rear, the fragments were detached from the bullet when it brushed against the transverse process of one of the vertebrae (I forget which one). That situation is impossible, for a bullet cannot have brushed against the transverse process without causing it damage of some kind-- one would expect considerable damage to the t.p. The transverse process is a very weak and brittle and frangible bone; it cannot endure any great shock, either to itself directly or to the flesh that surrounds it, without breaking. We know that the

that contradicts what I assert above.

Roffman



