

for Sylvia Meagher

COPY



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Dear Professor Bernabei,

I had promised myself some months ago not to get involved in letter arguments about the case; they usually don't add much illumination to matters. But I want you to be aware of certain points.

The claim that one of the 577 cases has a dent in its lip similar in all respects to the dent in the lip of 543 is news to me. My recollection of my own examination of the cases in January 1967 was that there was one rather obvious "chambering mark" on one case, a much less obvious "chambering mark" on the other, and no other distinguishing features on either case. My examination of the cases was rather hasty -- at the time I was in charge of the photographing of all the significant evidence for Life -- but I don't think it's likely that I would have missed such an obvious feature. Do I understand correctly that you have personally examined both cases labeled CE 577 and verify the existence of the lip dent on one of them? If so, I don't wish to contradict your own observation and remain at a loss to explain why such an apparently obvious feature missed my own eye.

I take it that we can agree on the following points. CE 543 has a dent in its lip and no chambering mark. CE 543 was held back by the Dallas Police. One cartridge case -- possibly though not even probably 543 -- was found some feet from the others. 544 and 545 have the characteristic chambering mark but, unlike 543, lack any dent in their respective tips. The complete round found in the rifle exhibits the characteristic chambering mark. Both cases marked CE 577 exhibit the chambering mark; according to your observation (?) one of the cases shows a dented tip. The unshot then is that every case known to have been in Oswald's rifle except 543 shows the characteristic chambering mark, two of the cases known to have been in Oswald's rifle show dented tips, ~~two~~ ^{three} show perfect tips. I submit the above facts leave us with a possible, perhaps even probable, explanation for the dented tip on 543 but no explanation at all for why it lacks the characteristic "chambering mark". If you have a photograph of the alleged dented tip in 577 I'd be most interested in comparing it with photos of 543.

Sincerely