

2701 Ridge Rd., Apt. 304  
Berkeley, Calif. 94709  
September 5, 1966

Mr. Fred J. Cook  
722 Fernmore Avenue  
Interlaken, N.J.

Dear Mr. Cook:

In your interesting letter on the assassination in the Nation of August 22, you present a possible reason for the failure of the Bethesda pathologists to get a probe through Kennedy's body. As I understand it, you imply that they were not familiar with the procedure of moving the body to recreate its position when struck.

However, when Dr. Finck wrote an article for Military Medicine (Vol. 130, no. 6, June 1965) he apparently knew of this method. He reproduces a photo of a body with an arm being held in position, and a metal probe following a bullet path through the forearm and into the chest. The text suggests that he was aware of the importance, in general, of establishing a path using a probe:

"Fig. 9 (Case 4) shows the victim of a justifiable homicide by a policeman. The prosecutor indicated in the autopsy room the path of the bullet, explaining how one missile produced three wounds. Such a photograph, correlated with the ballistic data of the police and the statement of the man who shot the victim, can be a very important factor in the interpretation of a (sic) case." (p. 556)

Incidentally, the rumor that accompanies this paper is that it was written to justify the findings of the autopsy; i.e. to explain how Kennedy's wounds were caused. It is a remarkably poorly organized paper, and its thesis, if any, is obscured by junk like the following:

"To square the velocity, the number can be multiplied by itself, or tables of squares available for up to three-digit numbers<sup>15,16</sup> can be used. If the number is larger than three digits, common (Briggsian) logarithmic tables<sup>15,16</sup> may be employed, or a calculator such as Remington-Rand printing calculator, Model No. 99140-5...." (p. 549)

At two separate points, however, Finck says that the assassination showed how two similar bullets can produce wounds of quite different appearances, depending on whether flesh or bone is struck.

It may be that the doctors tried the procedure you described to find a path, and failed; it may be that they were not aware of this method. Judging from the report of the FBI agents at the autopsy, and from the doctors' testimony, it seems likely that, after noting that the end of the back wound could be felt and that CE399 had been found, they decided that the bullet did not go through; and that they did not change their minds until well after the autopsy was concluded.

Sincerely yours,

*Paul L. Hoch*  
Paul L. Hoch

cc:Salandria  
Meagher