

From... Dick Bernabei
To..... Paul Hoch

Please read this (copy it if you wish),
and send it as
soon as possible
to Sylvia.

5 NOVEMBER 1970

Dear Paul:

Dick Bernabei

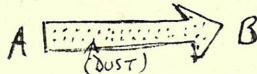
I do not have much time in which to write, so I shall limit my remarks only to what you say on pp. 14-20 of your "Draft Supplement to the Report on the Fatal Shot" (23 Oct. 1970), in which you discuss the dust-like fragments located in the right-front portion of the brain. If I have time, I'll also comment on your 29 Oct. letter to me.

It bewilders me why you thought it necessary to supplement my "naive physical argument" with what appears to me (and, I imagine, also to others) to be a heap of scientific jibberish. Who in Hell do you think I am? Einstein? Alvarez? On the matter of comprehensibility, I think my naive version has your sophisticated razzle-dazzle beat by a mile.

In examining my assertions you seem to have expended all of your energies (or should I say vectors? Oh, well.) seeking rebuttal (What did you find? "I found that the available medical evidence does not effectively rebut Bernabei's case."--p.14), and expended none in seeking confirmation. Did I not invite you to consult authorities? Did you not have the wit during these many days even to ask anyone who knows anything about bullets whether what I say is true? If I may venture into incomprehensible linguistics, as you dash into incomprehensible physics, know this: chi non cerca, non trova, and conversely, chi cerca, trova. If you don't know any expts in ballistics, then try any ding-a-ling tending shop in any gun store. What I described is not unusual, and it is not beyond his comprehension. It ought not to be beyond yours, with all your physics.

You create an unwarranted diversion by emphasizing the direction of the "cluster" of dust-like fragments, for it raises questions that I did not even pretend to answer. With or without reference to direction, all by itself and irrespective of what we know about JFK's movements or anything else, it is the mere presence of the dust-like fragments only in the right-front part of the brain that conclusively answers the question from what direction they originated. It answers that question unequivocally and to the exclusion of all other answers. The matter is so clear, so simple, that I cannot understand why you fail to ~~grasp it~~ to grasp it (do you fail?).

During their short trajectory as "dust", between the time when they are rendered into "dust" and the time when they finally come to rest, dust-like fragments of lead move as a cloud, as smoke, as a liquid spray, and they adhere to everything that they touch. This applies not merely to the dust-like fragments in JFK's brain, but to all dust-like fragments that result from bursted bullets. If they begin their trajectory at point A (diagram below, for nincompoops) and end it at point B, the whole area between A and B is littered with "dust":



(Christ! I would feel silly if I had to explain things in this way to a child!) Supposing that the "dust" traveled from A to B, you cannot have "dust" near point B without also having it

at point A. When I say "cannot" I mean "cannot", in the sense that apples cannot sua sponte (There I go again.) rise up and hang themselves on trees; whatever arguments the "new physics" may bring forth to suggest that something else is possible, they always fall down. The matter is that simple; I do not feel the need of explaining it to you "naively" in physical terms when you yourself can fully understand it better than I can in those terms.

A postscript on the matter of the alleged connection between the dust-like fragments at the front of the brain and the hole in the back of the head (This will indicate to you the measure of confidence with which I say I am right): I am more willing to believe that the hole in the back of the head is an exit hole (including the inferences that the report on coagulation necrosis was faked, and that the crater on the inside of the skull was chiselled there by hand), than to believe that a bullet which entered ~~thaxthaxk~~ at the back of the head deposited dust-like fragments of itself nowhere but in the front of the head. The latter assumption I know is impossible; the former is not.

You summarise my case like this (p. 15): "What Bernabei's argument can prove is only (my emphasis--RB) that the small fragments must have been created near where they came to rest." Only? What is the intent of this unwarranted rhetorical flourish? Do you seek to diminish by rhetoric what you cannot diminish by reference either to evidence or to applicable scientific principles (though by now I am very wary of your science)? Come on, will you, and get off of it. The knowledge that dust-like fragments always come to rest near the point where they are created provides the basis for the positive assertion that JFK was hit in the head from the front, for ~~thaxthaxk~~ dust-like fragments do occur in the front of his head, and do not occur at the back.

Your suggestion that these dust-like fragments may have devolved from a larger fragment which passed forward from the back and reached the front intact is (to be kind) absurd. Why do you make up such inane tales, as though your own physics did not prove you wrong? Isn't your science sufficient to tell you that this cannot happen? That apples cannot sua sponte (whoops!) hang themselves on trees? Doesn't it tell you that either the fragment bursts before it reaches the front, or it does not burst at all? I think your science does tell you that, but you are not listening-- or is it that you do not want to hear?

Let's see if your physics can explain this hypothetical set of phenomena (which, I suppose, is what you have in mind): A 6.5 mm full metal case bullet of 160-grains weight strikes the back of a head at about 1800 feet per second (a velocity which, by the way, is not sufficient to cause soft lead to burst into dust when it strikes living bone, not to mention hardened lead covered by a copper case); a large fragment of that bullet passes forward through brain matter at considerably less than 1800 fps. and suddenly bursts (Think now. On what does it burst? What causes it to burst? Do brains have

examination of the X-rays is certainly required." When I read statements like that (dare I call it an argument?), I begin to think that you know that I have ~~gx~~ burdened you not merely with the straw that broke the camel's back of your one-assassin fantasy, but with the ton of bricks that crushed it (may I use the term?) to dust. What warrant have you for disregarding the explicit statement that the dust-like fragments occur only at the front-right? The Panel docs report an observation, not an opinion. There were four docs who observed the dust-like fragments. Whatever they may lack in their ability to draw conclusions from what they observed, they are all competent observers. Moreover, what they observed is absolutely what I expected they would observe-- and they did it without my prompting, imagine that. What they observed was the natural and normal result of JFK having been struck in the head at the right-front; what they observed was not only natural and normal, it was predictable and (as I indicated in my letter) predicted. What you seek to do is to apply to these natural and normal phenomena ~~physics~~ a kind of physics which does not now exist, did not ever exist, and never will exist. How can you pass off as "plausible", or even "implausible", what is in fact impossible?

Try this one now (p.16): (Referring to the bullet fragment that miraculously burst into dust in midbrain) "This is conceivable, but hardly probable. The hypothesis that bullets can behave in that ~~fx~~ way should be tested experimentally before any conclusions are drawn." What you suggest is neither conceivable nor hardly probably-- it is impossible. Tested experimentally? If I told you that apples fall down from trees, would you suggest that those who cleave to that "hypothesis" ~~should~~ should test it experimentally by snipping the stem of an apple on a tree? This may seem a facetious analogy to you, but it is not to me, for as well as I know that apples fall down from trees, so well do I know that dust-like fragments come to rest near where they are created. Would you be satisfied if I told you that I have witnessed apples falling down from trees? That I have actually caused them to fall down from trees? I regret that on the many occasions when I witnessed and caused this I was not involved in an experimental situation, and did not record my observations immortally on film. In the absence of means whereby I might ^{immediately} prove the phenomenon to you scientific skeptics, go cut your own apples. What was the photograph that I sent you, if not an illustration of the principle that "dust" stops near its point of origin? I do not have other photographs handy, but will get them, though they are superfluous. How many such tests do you need? Three, ten, a hundred? There are limits at which even I get tired of cutting down apples from trees, so don't tax me too much. Just tell me how many such pictures you need.

I'll go you one better. You provide me with evidence of any kind (never mind your physics, just give me the stuff that you call "hard" evidence) that a group of dust-like fragments can pass any point in any reasonably solid substance and fail to leave the same sort of dust at the beginning of their trajectory as they leave at the end of it. What is a "reasonably solid substance"? A human brain? I wouldn't inflict that requirement on you. Cheesecake would be all right. Take your pick of substances

between those limits-- brains and cheesecake. How many illustrative photos do you have to send me? One. Even if your phenomenon happens once out of a thousand tries, one. One photo or one ~~of anything~~ of anything "hard" that does no more than imply that what you suggest is possible. Do that, and you will have opened for consideration what is now, by virtue of naive empirical observation and sophisticated physical theorizing, inconceivable, except of course to those who don't yet know that apples fall down from trees.

I regret that I cannot prove it impossible except by reference to experience, which, regrettably, you physicists (or is it you physicist?) appear to think bears little relation to life-- or to truth. Nevertheless, at least for the benefit of others who read this letter, if not for yours, I repeat verbatim what I said in my letter (p.7) about not one of these dust-like fragments occurring in the place where we would expect all of them to be: "In my own experience, in the experience of other gun buffs with whom I have spoken, and after a course of considerable reading about firearms and ballistics (i.e., the experience of recognized experts--RB), I know of no instance when such a phenomenon has happened in the past, nor do I anticipate that it will ever happen in the future." So much for experience, my own, that of my shooting friends, and that of recognized experts. Do I consult experts? Man, I am an expert, both by virtue of experience and by virtue of "book-larnin' ". You may come to know better experts than me, some that are officially recognized as experts, but right now I'm the best you've got-- and you've got not a bad one at that. Check around, and see if I've ever given anybody a bum steer in matters related to firearms and ballistics. In these matters I don't guess without saying that I'm guessing. And I don't say I'm right without knowing that I'm right.

In the matter of the dust-like fragments, I know that I'm right. What's more, I think you know that I'm right, notwithstanding your "most probably" this and your "hardly probable" that. You know because you cannot yourself prove me wrong, and you cannot yet imagine who can. Try Alvarez; he's good at making a weak case appear ~~strong~~ strong. (Is that where you learned the tricks of your trade, how to razzle-dazzle truth into falsehood by a kind of science that it appears only you and Alvarez understand? You havn't dazzled me, and as far as I can tell you havn't razzled anybody else.)

To say that the burden of my "intriguing argument" is that "the pattern of metal fragments in the President is not consistent with a single shot from the rear" (p. 14) is to express in ~~weak~~ mellow equivocal terms what I described as hard and unequivocal evidence. If I did not make it clear before, let me make it clear now: The size and distribution of the dust-like particles is inimical to the notion ~~that~~ of a single shot from the rear. They prove positively that a shot originated from the front, and they vitiate all other indications that suggest otherwise (there are none, by the way, but I mention this lest you invent one.)

English: I took
time to get this
so long to you.
was hard to find