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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 16, 1967

The Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you in the hope that a serious situation, which has become almost ludicrous, may finally be resolved.

On September 28, 1966, I introduced my resolution (H.Con.Res. 1023) for the establishment of a joint committee of the House and Senate to review the findings of the Warren Commission on the Kennedy assassination.

My statement in connection therewith, which you received at the time, is set forth at page 23203 of the Congressional Record of that date.

There have been many doubts raised about the findings contained in the Warren Commission Report, but, in my opinion, the most vulnerable of the findings is that known as the "single bullet" theory.

If the theory is rejected, then it is possible that there was more than one assassin. If the theory is sustained, then there is a possibility that reasonable people can consider the case closed.

As you well know, Governor Connally insists that he was not hit by the same shot that hit President Kennedy, although, strangely enough, Governor Connally accepts the conclusions of the Commission's Report.

As a result of the research done by Edward J. Epstein published in his book entitled "Inquest", a great deal of information has been brought to light about the methods of the Warren Commission. You will recall that Senator Russell was merely willing to call the "single bullet" theory "credible", while the drafters of the Report wanted to call it "compelling", and compromise was found in the word "persuasive". See Life Magazine of November 25, 1966 at page 53.

In all the discussions about the single bullet theory, I have been amazed to find that the X-rays and photographs taken at the autopsy of the late President Kennedy were not made available to the Commission. Arlen Specter, who worked on this phase of the investigation, in his interview in U. S. News and World Report of October 10, 1966, at page 53, states that the Commission did not press for the photographs and X-rays because they did not consider them "indispensable" and would merely corroborate what the autopsy surgeons had testified to under oath.

That the autopsy surgeons were not necessarily well informed is detailed at page 53, among others, of the Life Magazine article above mentioned.

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It became increasingly clear to me that the X-rays and photographs should be officially examined, and, accordingly, I addressed a communication to the National Archives requesting an opportunity, together with some outstanding and knowledgeable people in the field, to view these items.

Attached hereto as Exhibit "A" is a copy of my letter of December 27, 1966 to the Chief Archivist of the United States and his reply of January 6, 1967 (Exhibit "B").

I then followed up with Burke Marshall and received the reply dated January 25, 1967, copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "C".

I had thought that deposit with the Archives, in view of the public fanfare, had some significance. In the absence of official investigation, this is all illusory.

It is inconceivable to me that a matter of personal preference, no matter how delicate to the parties involved, should stand in the way of the public's right to know.

William Manchester, in the second installment of his book "The Death of a President", as it appears in Look Magazine of February 7, 1967, at page 45 states as follows:

In the summer of 1966, a former Cornell graduate student published a dissertation that suggested that this first bullet followed a different trajectory. The implication was that a second assassin had aided Oswald. The issue is resolved by the X-rays and photographs which were taken from every conceivable angle during the autopsy on the President's body. Robert Kennedy has decided that this material is too unsightly to be shown to anyone, including qualified scholars, until 1971. He has turned it over to the National Archives with that restriction. Although this writer has not seen the material, he interviewed three people with special qualifications who examined it before it was put under seal. None of them knew the other two, but all three gave identical accounts of what they had seen in the photographs and X-rays. The X-rays show no entry wound "below the shoulder," as argued by the graduate student. Admittedly, X-rays of active projectiles passing through soft tissue are difficult to read. However, the photographs support them in this case--and clearly reveal that the wound was in the neck. Finally, the recollections of all doctors present during the autopsy, including the President's personal physician, agree unanimously with this overwhelming evidence.

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You are, no doubt, aware of the controversy involved with respect to the publication of the Manchester book, but that was complicated by a matter of a private contract.

In my opinion, the question of the X-rays and photographs, certainly to the extent of a proper analysis for a public report as to the specific item of where the entry wound was with respect to the first bullet, is a public matter for which there must be an official examination and analysis.

You have heretofore stated that you expect all of this material to be made available to the public, and in your comments on the Freedom of Information Act, which you supported, you made similar statements.

I now ask you for the right to examine the X-rays and photographs, as stated in my letter of December 27, 1966 to the Chief Archivist and, failing that, I call upon you to direct forthwith that there be an official examination of the X-rays and photographs with a public statement by those examining them as to their findings and conclusion.

Most respectfully,

(signed)

Theodore R. Kupferman, M.C.

TRK:ejc

Enclosures