

Saturday 6 August 1966

Mr. Ray Marcus
1249 Hi Point Street
Los Angeles 90035

Dear Ray,

Your envelope arrived this morning and I have just finished reading it through. I congratulate you sincerely for a masterful organization and presentation of the known evidence, including a number of salient points not, to my knowledge, previously picked up by anyone.

My comments on the enclosed two pages are on very minor points, often relating only to drafting changes to achieve greater clarity or precision. You could certainly submit the manuscript without making any of the substantive changes, with one exception--the page 75 footnote. That I do feel strongly about.

The main difficulty I foresee for your fine analysis is length. I cannot think of any periodical (popular circulation) that would accomodate it; have you thought in terms of more technical or professional journals? Law, criminology, etc? At the same time, it is not long enough for a book; nor is it easy to justify a book devoted to this one aspect of the evidence, however crucial it is.

One possibility might be an anthology of short, and shorter-than-book-length articles on various phases of the evidence: combining your "Bastard Bullet," Dave Lifton's "Dialogue" or part of it, and similar unpublished but completed work. It might be a good bet for paperback publication, now that anything dealing with the WR is "hot."

Perhaps I should mention one detraction, even if it is a purely personal and subjective criticism--but in the delineation of hypotheses you develop such a complexity of headings, sub-headings, and sub-subs, in such telegraphic or chart style, that it can become stupefying and stops making impact or sense. I would find it easier to follow if it was in narrative style. Why not try converting one or two hypotheses to narrative and see if it accomplishes the main purpose without losing value? Again, let me emphasize that my reaction is based on my own limitations as a reader and the fact that I find the presentation difficult; others may find it helpful in the present form, and less effective in narrative.

Again, warm congratulations on a truly authoritative and persuasive criticism of the 399 bullet; and feel assured that I will be alert for any possibilities of the publication it surely merits.

Sincerely yours,

Sylvia Meagher

Page 1, paragraph 2 The Commission contends this series of acts but not all of them, since the WR does not take into account the bullet fragments in Connally's chest. It is only when we read Dr. Shires' testimony that we learn about those fragments. You might make a small drafting change, something like "fracturing his fifth rib (and, although the Commission does not acknowledge it, leaving metal fragments en route)"; also, the WC says the bullet fell off (not was found on) Connally's stretcher.

Page 2 Since the sentence preceding the asterisk in paragraph 1 is not a direct quotation from Salandria, the footnote should say "That has been pointed out by Vincent J. Salandria..." etc. or something of the sort.

Page 3 Zapruder's name is Abraham, not Nathan.

Page 4 In paragraph 3, I am not sure that the Commission itself ever concedes that Connally "is reacting to a hit prior to frame 240." The Commission presents various arguments to place the hit before frame 240 but I don't think there is any claim that the Commission is able to see him reacting. (A small point, in any case.)

Page 5, last three lines, since this is a direct quotation, the source should be indicated.

Page 10 After extracting two "yesses" in this manner...

Page 13 "(Apparently no attempt was made to simulate the Governor's thigh wound.)"

Page 15, end of paragraph 2: "Under the circumstances, the suspicion is justified that other test bullets have been withheld because if they had been shown they would have sapped still more the credibility of the Commission's case."

Page 16, line 3, again, replace "found on his stretcher" by a phrase indicating that it dropped off a stretcher which the WC claims was Connally's. The same should be done throughout the manuscript.

Page 17 footnote You might wish to add here that Tomlinson was interviewed both by the FBI and the Secret Service (6H 132) but the reports on those interviews have been withheld from the published exhibits. Those interviews might have cast some light on the time factor. *

Page 18 The difficulty with "an entirely different" stretcher is that the orderly said that he had put no stretcher other than Connally's on the elevator; but no inquiry was made to rule out other orderlies and other stretchers; nor even to establish whether or not there were other gunshot victims admitted to the hospital that day.

*On reaching page 33 I see that you have covered this; as you will have realized by now, my comments are based on page-by-page first reading and some of them become anachronistic as I proceed further into the manuscript.

Page 35, paragraph 4: Excellent point, which I had overlooked as, I believe, all the other researchers missed too.

Page 45 Again, an excellent point! (re residue on the two fragments)

Page 51 Very fine points made, for the first time, I believe.
to P.53

Page 71, line 1: "committed perjury before the Commission."

Page 73, fifth line from bottom, Abraham (not Nathan) Zapruder

Page 75 footnote The statement that the FBI has now repudiated its own reports is entirely too categorical. The FBI through anonymous and unnamed spokesmen has made a series of "statements" reported in the press from the 29th of May 1966 (Washington Post) to the present, including refusals to comment; suggestions that the FBI reports were only preliminary and hasty; suggestions that the FBI was only repeating what the doctors had said; etc. In no way can those leaks and leaked contradictions be regarded as an official FBI repudiation of its reports. In strict fact, the FBI has made no explanation and no comment whatsoever, for that would have required a formal statement by the Director or an authorized official taking a definite stand; no such responsible statement has been forthcoming. And, for your private information, a recent call to the FBI by a researcher assisting your bete noire Ed E. elicited the definite response (by telephone) from an FBI spokesman (whose name has been given to me but I can't remember it or find the paper on which I jotted it down--shades of Bogard!) that the FBI does NOT repudiate or retract its reports.

Page 76 footnote Line 4, "representing a collective total of almost 100 years of experience..." Line 5, "had made an aggregate of approximately 15,000..."

The footnote as a whole is too important to be relegated to place outside the body of the ms. I believe that it should be incorporated into the text-proper. While it is important, it has certain drawbacks (which I mentioned on the telephone)--(1) the lack of attribution by name to the six experts you consulted; and (2) I still think it necessary to solicit their opinion on the basis of a specific case in which the bullet was NOT recovered inside the body, to give them an opportunity to comment on the possibilities to account for the absence of the missile under the specific constraints--ie, did not exit from body, was not found inside body, and penetrated only to a shallow depth.

Page 80 I agree with your reasoning but I would suggest another (faint) possibility. A legitimate Connally bullet (deformed, with blood and tissue on its surface) was legitimately found; it was fired from a rifle other than the G2766 Carcano; at some point in time, CE 399 was deliberately substituted. In other words, allow both for the planting of 399 in advance, or subsequently; if in advance, those known to be present at the hospital come under suspicion (including Ruby). Also, if in advance, what did become of the legitimate Connally and/or Kennedy bullets? The existence of that question should be recognized in your thesis, although I see no obligation for you to provide answers.