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Miss Sylvia Meagher  
302 West 12th Street  
New York, NY 10014

Dear Miss Meagher:

I am writing to you because I am in the process of completing a book on the assassination of the late President John F. Kennedy, looked at from the point of view of a coroner or a medical examiner. Sally Carson, a former student and a dear friend, wrote that she had a most interesting and informative conversation with you about the assassination. She indicated to me that you might have files on the autopsy findings which you might be able to make available to me.

As you know better than I, there are severe problems with the National Archives in getting materials from them, even those that are not under the so called classified category. At the present time, I am waiting for a number of glossy prints to be used as illustrations in the book. Despite the fact that I have paid for them and my check has cleared the bank, I am still waiting for the materials.

I hate to trouble you with a long letter, but I thought it might be of interest to you to know my approach. I plan to start out with a fairly detailed but simple explanation of what a Forensic autopsy is, what it is supposed to do, and the details of how it should be conducted. I plan to use the generally accepted routine procedures as the baseline from which I want to start. Then I want to move to government directives which were in existence at the time of Kennedy's autopsy. These directives spell out in great detail, not merely as guidance but clearly as orders, how an autopsy of any sort is to be conducted on Department of Defense installations or by Department of Defense officers. Once that has been established, then I want to approach the actual autopsy; the way it was done, the way it was reported, and show the discrepancies. At the present time, my study of the 26 volumes of hearings, plus material which has come to light since the publication of those volumes, leads me to the conclusion that there is no way for a scientist to arrive at the final summation of the killing that the Warren Commission arrived at. It seems to me that, without even looking for missing information, what already exists in the printed record available to everyone in the form of medical evidence and in the form of pathological



evidence, one must conclude that the end result of the Warren Commission deliberations was incompetent, mischievous, or simply manufactured for some governmental reason not apparent to me at this time.

I have know Pierre Fink personally for many years. He is now a Colonel in the Medical Service of the Air Force. I recently retired as a Colonel in the Medical Service of the United States Air Force Reserve after 32 years of commissioned service. During that time, I served at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for some 15 years. I got to know Pierre Fink well. I lunched with him, I gave seminars which he was one of the participants, and we exchanged many views. I also am bewildered at the quality of the post-mortem examination which he was forced into.

It seems clear to me that there had to be at least two riflemen shooting in order to carry out the end result that we see in the assassination. Whether there were more than two I can not say. I also have great difficulties with the wound in the back of the President and trying to line it up with the wound in the anterior throat. My anatomical searches here make it virtually impossible to accept an angle above the horizontal for that particular wound. Assuming that, in fact, the entrance wound in the President's back goes into a tunnel which comes out in the anterior throat. Anatomically, if the bullet came from the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository, entered the President's back where his personal physician wrote on the death certificate that it did enter, then proceeded forward in a straight line, it would come out somewhere midway down the breast bone. This does not seem an inappropriate route for the bullet to take because we are told by the Warren Commission that the bullet hit no hard tissue but in a sense slipped between muscle masses.

In so doing, it would therefore not be diverted from a straight line course. However, accepting the entrance-exit wounds as fact, if one lines them up, one then sees that the bullet had to come along a more horizontal course. The claim that the President was leaning over when this particular bullet struck him is not supportable because of the corset-like undergarment the President wore and on the basis of photographs taken by responsible press photographers who identify these as taken moments before the actual shooting. In these photographs, the President is sitting upright, his chin is raised, and his arm is resting relaxed on the rim on the limousine. When one puts these facts together, the course of the bullet which is said to have caused the non-fatal wounds on Kennedy just can not be squared with what the Warren Commission maintains.

I have reached the stage where I should go to the National Archives and examine what material will be made available. Do you, by any chance, know the name of the Kennedy family lawyer who screens these requests? If you do, I would appreciate receiving his name so I could make the requests despite the fact that it galls me to be forced to ask permission of another private citizen in order to see materials which are of a public nature, under public custody, and being processed and stored with some of my tax money. Be that as it may, if you do have that name, I would appreciate receiving it. In addition, if you have any suggestions about how to facilitate the handling of these requests so that there will be minimum delay in getting approval, I would appreciate any advice based on your experience.

I assure you I am not concerned with any political aspects or spies coming from foreign countries type of thing in connection with this book. I want to stay strictly focused on the Forensic aspects. As I indicated before, I want to look at it as a medical examiner would and then proceed from there. If you have any material on the autopsy findings which you could share with me including sketches or any kind of material no matter how slight, I would appreciate being able to look at it, and certainly I would make only such use of it as met with your full approval.

I know Dr. Wecht well, and, in fact, I am going to have him on a symposium which I will be chairing in San Diego in February. It deals with Environmental Pathology. However, he and I have exchanged letters on the Kennedy assassination, and indeed, he has allowed me to use several illustrations which he has put together from the materials he has examined at the Archives.

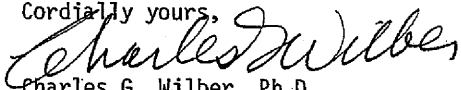
I have read some of Dr. Nichols material, but I have not corresponded with him. He seems to be having grave difficulties in getting permission to examine materials in the Archives. Incidentally, he is a well respected pathologist and the type of scholar who should be given ready access.

I hope that this lengthy letter will not be annoying to you. As I say, I would like to be able to get this book finished within a reasonable period of time. I have a very short chapter in my forthcoming book on Ballistic Science in which I discuss the Kennedy assassination. I do this in order to use the assassination as an example of how Ballistic Science, if properly carried out, could in fact solve a mystery.

I am somewhat pessimistic in the long run, and I understand that Sally Carson felt that you are somewhat pessimistic about the possibility that we will ever know the complete and true story of the assassination. The reason for this is that I am convinced in my own mind that significant materials, possibly including autopsy specimens which have been destroyed either willfully or through neglect, and other materials, documents, and so forth, have been diverted or buried in such a way that their recovery by scholars will be highly questionable. Nevertheless, I feel that examining what is available should lead us to a little more understanding of that disaster a few years ago.

Any help you can give me in these matters will be deeply appreciated. I certainly will keep you posted on the progress of my book.

Cordially yours,



Charles G. Wilber, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director  
(Deputy Coroner Larimer County, Colorado)

CGW:sb