

14 August 1967

Mrs. Ruth Fortel
260 West 29 Street
New York, N.Y. 10001

Dear Ruth Fortel,

Thank you for allowing me to read your manuscript. My impression, in capsule, is: (1) The medical and anatomical drawings are excellent and have given me many new insights into the autopsy and medical findings. I believe this work to be of great value, and an essential addition to the critical literature and the historical record.

(2) The over-all organization of the manuscript is good; but the internal structure of some chapters is poor. Those chapters should be reformulated so as to introduce a sharper focus. The reader should always be able to understand the precise issue that is under discussion, what arguments you are bringing to bear, and what your inferences and conclusions are. In the chapters on the Zapruder film and the Secret Service special agents in the motorcade, for example, this is not the case.

(3) The writing is generally fair and often good. Style and clarity could be improved but I see no serious problem in the writing as such.

The manuscript is not yet complete; and I can truthfully say that I was sorry when I came to the end, not relieved. I would have liked to read more and to obtain a better understanding of your ultimate conclusions—some of which are perhaps suggested in the loose pages of drawings and diagrams.

The technical and anatomical work certainly seems of very high quality and I think that you have in the making a potentially important and original work. The chief dissatisfaction that I experienced in reading the manuscript was that it did not provide an over-all personal perspective. It needs to open with a major statement, giving your evaluation of the autopsy (botched? fraudulent? or what?), your reconstruction (the actual nature of the wounds, the number of shots and their sources, etc.), and your conclusions about what must really have occurred in Dealey Plaza, as opposed to what the Warren Report asserts. You are too hesitant, I think, to pronounce your opinions and arguments. Authoritative findings should be stated in positive terms, not merely "lost" within the exposition of facts. The problem, the analysis, the arguments, and the conclusions should always be distinct.

I hope that you will continue and complete your work on the manuscript and that the finished work will reflect the force inherent in your data. Please accept my congratulations on the important research you have done on the autopsy; and you may feel free to show this letter to any publisher whom you may approach. With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

Sylvia Heagher
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New York, N.Y. 10014