

10 August 1966

Mr. Kenneth Auchincloss
Associate Editor
~~New York~~
155 Madison Avenue
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Dear Mr. Auchincloss,

Congratulations on your story, "Again, the Assassination," in the August 15th issue and on the interesting information in the footnote (page 31) on the failure of attempts to trace the present whereabouts of the autopsy photographs and x-rays. As you are surely aware, the determination of custody of that invaluable evidence is a matter of the highest urgency, because the undeveloped color film—already inevitably deteriorated—will disintegrate completely at the expiration of five years (i.e., November 1968) and be forever lost, with inevitable historical ambiguity the result.

I am especially pleased by the emphasis in your story on the pristine stretcher bullet. Within the last few days I have received from Ray Marcus of Los Angeles (one of the first-generation-researchers on the assassination) a masterful 80-page analysis of the stretcher bullet and collateral evidence—a most impressive, well-argued study. I am suggesting to Mr. Marcus that he send you a copy, for your information and suggestions.

If I may, I would take issue with you on the question of the fatal head wound. You say that no serious objection has been offered to the key Commission finding that a bullet struck the back of the head and blasted away a five-inch jagged hole in the skull in its exit. Not one of the many Parkland Hospital doctors who participated in the attempt to save the President's life saw the entrance wound in the back of the head—but I anticipate your rebuttal (they did not turn him over) and will not press that point. But there are far more formidable questions:

(1) Three Secret Service agents and two FBI agents were present at the autopsy (Secret Service agent Clinton Hill was called in expressly to view the wounds; the others were in attendance throughout). Not one of these five non-medical witnesses, with the exception of Kellerman, saw or corroborated the existence of the small round entrance wound in the back of the head.

(2) Secret Service agent Kellerman did testify to seeing such a wound but he described it as being in the hairline to the right of the right ear—that is, if we take him literally, in the sideburn or hairline above the right cheek (which would be consistent with first reports of a bullet striking the right temple). But even if Kellerman really meant to say in the hairline to the left of the right ear, the description is still inconsistent with the schematic drawings prepared under the instructions of the autopsy surgeon, Commander J. J. Humes (CSs 386 and 388), which show the entrance wound considerably higher than the hairline.

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(3) A crude sketch of the skull detailing the fractures and other characteristics was made by an autopsy surgeon and is found in GE 397 (Volume IVII, page 46). Because I could not see in that drawing any sign of the small bullet entrance wound in the back of the head, I solicited the opinion of an outstanding American forensic pathologist. He has informed me, in a letter which I am prepared to make available if need be, that, indeed, the autopsy sketch of the head injuries does not show any small round wound of entrance. Moreover, it is his opinion that the sketch indicates a fracture on the left side of the skull (near the left eye, if I understand correctly) which was not specifically mentioned in the autopsy report.

The significance of these facts is self-evident--particularly in the light of the contradictory evidence concerning the location of the entrance wound in the back, which, as you say, raises "puzzling questions."

Yours very sincerely,

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