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OFFICE OF THE CORONER

November 14, 1974

Mr. Thomas Stamm
2705 Bainbridge Avenue
Bronx, New York 10458

Dear Mr. Stamm:

I am sorry about the breakdown in our communications. I appreciate being informed of your views, but my schedule makes it impossible for me to engage in protracted discussion of them. Your letters pose many complex questions concerning the motivations of various persons of whom I know very little and about whom it would be presumptuous of me to speculate.

You seem to want to go beyond the evidence in the case in order to find some sinister purpose, and you appear to be disappointed that I do not give you my support in these extrapolations. I cannot and will not go beyond the evidence, and it is unfair of you to upbraid me, as you do in your latest letter, for not having been "already convinced" of certain inferences about the Warren Commission's purposes, inferences which even now I cannot draw except within the limitations of the factual material available to me and in the specific form which I have written.

To go beyond the facts and to conclude, as you insist that I should, that "the government was engaged in concealing the motivation, source, and personnel of the conspiracy which removed the head of state by murder and cleared the road for military adventure in southeast Asia" is unjustified and not substantiated by any hard evidence. If I am to be intellectually honest in my criticism of the Commission and the government for their blundering and misuse of the evidence, I must also point out the fallacies of those who insist on drawing conclusions which go far beyond that evidence.

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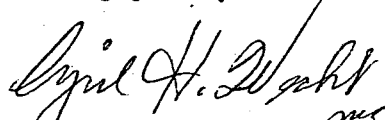
Your earlier letters are largely concerned with the Burkley death certificate, and you demand to know what "importance" or "significance" it has. I am sorry, but I do not know -- I did not write or issue it. Moreover, I did not discover it at the Archives. Its existence was not called to my attention until quite some time after its discovery, and its disclosure to me caused the original discoverer to become enraged and abusive at what he seemed to feel was a devaluation of his literary property. I have never commented on it or otherwise made use of it in any of my own writings. Since you are undoubtedly aware of the identity of the original discoverer, and possibly in communication with him, I suggest you address your questions to him.

I shall, however, make this observation about the Burkley death certificate. In respect to the location of the President's back wound, it is in substantial disagreement with other available medical reports and the autopsy photographs. Consequently to ascribe accuracy to it requires that we believe that the other materials are fraudulent or fabricated (not merely erroneous), and that we attribute willful deceit or consent to fraud (not merely blunders) to some or all of the persons present at the autopsy (about 30) as well as those in a position to have known about the later fabrication and substitution of the photos. Moreover, all of these people had to keep silent or be kept silent for all these years, and yet the persons who conspired to maintain this cover-up had to be forgetful or somehow incapable of destroying the Burkley certificate, instead of allowing it to survive, to be reviewed and released years later and ultimately to be discovered by a private citizen, thereby exposing the fraud.

Against this explanation, we have the alternate hypothesis that the Burkley certificate is simply in error, and that Admiral Burkley misperceived the location of the wound by a few inches or that he relied on someone else's observations without checking them himself. I shall let you draw your own conclusions about the matter without impressing mine on you; I decline to enter into futile polemics on the subject.

I hope that one day, somehow, we shall have the opportunity to learn what really happened in the actual assassination and the subsequent investigation.

Sincerely yours,


Cyril H. Wecht, M.D., J.D.

CHW/bhm