

Dear Roger,

Reference to Dr. George Burkley in Richard Libalen's article in the Saturday Evening Post of September 1975 reminded me I had not responded to your letter of July 22, 1974 which I took with me to the Cape. At first I thought I would put off answering until I returned to New York in September. I wanted to have a vacation from the assumption of STP and do some reading on other subjects which I have long put off because of concentration on that problem.

But it is hopeless. Material continues to accumulate and demands interest and analysis, and correspondence requires thought and further research. On the other hand probing for information and search for collaboration have run up to blank walls. I am tempted to sum up the thought and effort of more than eleven years in one or two "reports" and resume studies put aside too long ago. The Fall should suffice for that and when I leave New York for the winter, in January, I will be free. Or so I delude myself?

In the meantime there is at hand an interesting letter from the Archives accompanying material. Lordered. A number of points relate to your effort to "restructure the medical evidence."

First, there is the truly remarkable information that even at this late date the Archives are unable to establish the number of executive sessions held by the Warren Commission and are unable to ~~reconcile~~ explain the absence of formal agendas for a number of sessions and the absence of a transcript for a session for which an agenda exists. Note too, the memorandum of "June 30, 1964 To: members of the President's Commission From: J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel Subject: Commission Meeting - 9:30 a.m., July 2, 1964," which reads "This will confirm a telephone conversation with your office, advising that Commission meeting has been scheduled at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, July 2, 1964;" and of which meeting there appears to be no record. How many others? Does not this ambiguity, so far totally unremarked and unexplained, make it necessary to qualify conclusions about the Commission's approach to and handling of evidence?

The information the Archives have no further data on the subject of the "minutes of the autopsy" requested by Rankin in January, 1964, leaves the question of their existence, whereabouts and/or demise hanging in the air.

As for the death certificates, the Archives' letter gives us nothing to work on. Nevertheless, the more I think about ^{them} it, the more extraordinary they become. Is Clark's characteristic? That is, was he accustomed to including only the ~~reason~~ cause of death? Nothing more? And in a single phrase conveying only a general locus of the fatal wound?

On remembering that he and Bursley consulted about it and that the latter was present when Clark filled out the form did Bursley instruct Clark in what to say? And if so, does this have relevance to Bursley's return to the emergency room to look for poses or bullets? And to his conversation with ~~Sackey~~ Jacqueline Kennedy in Air Force One en route to Washington from Dallas in which he explained to her the need to look for bullets in Kennedy's body to match with evidence yet to be

found? In a word did Buscley restrict Clark's
form because he planned one of his own and
did not yet know what would have to go into it,
hence did not want to risk difficulties and
possible contradictions if Clark were more detailed?

Will we ever get answers to these questions? Wecht
might help us but, like Weisberg, offers very little
and only under pressure. Possibly, I do him an
injustice but I think he prefers to be a critic in
his field of expertise rather than an investigator. How
much further ahead we all could be if Wecht if
approached Parkland Hospital. Dr. McClelland
about the wound he insists he saw on the left side
of Kennedy's head. and Dr. Clark about his
death certificate. and Dr. Buscley about
his and other matters too. Perhaps he has but
will not or cannot reveal the fact and the result.
I wonder.

With respect to the seeming contradiction between
the absence of a bullet in Kennedy's body and the
FBI receipt for a missile removed by autopsy surgeon
Dr. Humes, the Archives is a little more helpful.

They have no "other documents" but they sent me the November 26, 1964 report on the autopsy of FBI agents Sibert and O'Neil which I had not read in whole but only in part as quoted by the Commission and its critics. It is very interesting.

This document reveals the FBI injected itself into the situation when Air Force One arrived in Washington. Agents O'Neill and Sibert "proceeded to Andrews Air Force Base to handle any matters which would fall within the jurisdiction of the F-B-I." This was at "approximately 3 p.m." At "5:55 p.m." they were advised to "accompany the body to the National Naval Medical Center ... to stay with the body, and to obtain bullets reportedly in the President's body." Everyone was looking for bullets.

In a study of the legal aspects of the FBI's role in the post-assassination, published in N.Y.U.'s law journal in 1965 or 6 or 7 (I have it at home), it was concluded the FBI had no legal basis for its intervention and for its investigation. But, writes Whalen in the Sat. Eve. Post, "Immediately after the assassination, President Johnson had ordered a

special FBI investigation " How soon after 1 PM on Nov. 22, 1963, when Kennedy was pronounced dead, was "immediately?" Was it while Johnson was in the air from Dallas to Washington? If so the FBI may have acted in response to presidential orders. Or more likely, was it after Johnson reached the White House, and the FBI had already entered the situation? In the latter eventuality, did the FBI move in response to orders from the Attorney General, officially in command of the FBI who met the plane, accompanied the body to Bethesda Naval Hospital, waited out the autopsy on the 17th floor, received self progress reports from Burkley, issued instructions to restrict the autopsy by forbidding dissection of his brother's neck and appropriated evidence which he withheld from examination and to which he successfully restricted access even beyond his own life?

In any case why should the FBI "obtain bullets reportedly in the President's body?" For examination in its labs, no doubt. But why did they have to accompany the body to

do it, that is, to keep it under surveillance?
Who was mistrusted? And why? Was it the
Secret Service?

Sibert and O'Neill noted "During the course of the
autopsy, Lt. Col. P. Finck, U.S. Army Armed Forces Institute
of Pathology, arrived to assist Commander Humes in the
autopsy. No mention is made in their report of the
third autopsy surgeon, Boswell! But a "S.T.
Boswell" is listed among thirteen others, including
"A.M. Berkeley" and "Commander James S. Humes,"
as "individuals" who "attended the autopsy."
The presence of ~~five~~ other naval and army personnel
was noted.

The agents described the preliminary procedures
concluding with the taking of X-rays and
photographs. Then "the first incision was made at
8:15 p.m." They did not note the time at which the
autopsy was concluded which, if I remember correctly,
was done at 11 or 11:30 p.m. or thereabouts. Nor
did they describe the autopsy procedures which
consumed some three hours. They made no
note of the information Berkeley gave the

autopsy surgeons about the number of shots fired in Dallas; and they omitted mention of the restrictions placed on the autopsy surgeons by higher authority.

But they did include information bearing on the "seeming contradiction" about which I approached the Archives: "AMC Chester H. Boyers, U.S. Navy, visited the autopsy room during the final stages of such. To type receipts given by FBI and Secret Service for items obtained." That explains the existence of the receipt they signed.

It does not clear up the contradiction completely. The receipt specifies a "missile." The Sibert-O'Neill report relates "Inasmuch as no complete bullet of any size could be located in the brain area and likewise no bullet could be located in the back or any other area of the body, as determined by total body x-rays and inspection ~~revealing~~ ~~there was~~

The report also notes "During the autopsy inspection of the area of the brain, two fragments of metal were removed by Dr. Humes, namely one fragment

measuring 7x2 millimeters, which was removed from the right side of the brain. An additional fragment of metal measuring 1x3 millimeters was also removed from this area, both of which were placed in a glass jar containing a black metal top which were thereafter marked for identification and following the signing of a proper receipt were transported by Bureau agents to the FBI laboratory.

So, it is likely the receipt for a "missile" was a receipt for two fragments. But then we must believe that these agents trained to note time precisely, and careful to compile a roster of the brass present at the autopsy, and instructed to look for and obtain bullets from Kennedy's body, carelessly or purposefully misidentified two ^{small} fragments, as the larger one approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{13}$ " of an inch, the smaller one $\frac{1}{27}$ " x $\frac{1}{13}$ " of an inch, as a whole missile. In weighing the probabilities it should be borne in mind the receipt was signed in the autopsy room; the report is dated Nov. 26, four days later, when Dr. Humes had burned his notes, his original report had been revised, and Bucklen had issued the "official" autopsy report with which the Secret Service had persuaded or induced the

Parkland Hospital doctors, to modify their earlier opinions Kennedy's anterior neck wound was one of entry.
It is interesting to note the observation of Weesberg's protegee Hoffmann in his book Presumed Guilty, that the FBI reports of December 9, 1963 and January 13, 1964 contain no reference to that wound.

Also to be borne in mind is the Siebert-O'Neill account of Dr. Humes failure to find a bullet in Kennedy's body by probing "with the fingers" for "a short distance;" his being told of the hiding of a bullet in Parkland Hospital; his receipt of "a piece of the skull" which x-rays showed had been clipped and contained "minute metal particles; and his statement "the pattern was clear... one bullet had entered the President's back and had worked its way out of the body during aternal cardiac massage - and that a second high velocity bullet had entered the rear of the skull and had fragmented prior to exit through the top of the skull."

Siebert-O'Neill gave no indication in their report of the absurdity of Humes' clean pattern.
According to Humes a high velocity bullet

shattered a part of Kennedy's skull and fragmented as it did so. And the back wound bullet which penetrated only, a "short distance" into Kennedy's back and fell out under cardiac massage, was that a high-velocity bullet too? Weber - O'Neill did not say so but they reported "A call was made by Bureau agents to the Firearms Section of the FBI Laboratory, at which time SA Charles L. Killion advised that the Laboratory had received through Postal Service Agent Richard Johnson a bullet which had reportedly been found on a stretcher in the emergency room of Parkland Hospital ... Agent Killion further described this bullet as pertaining to a 6.5 millimeter rifle which would be approximately a 25 caliber rifle and that this bullet consisted of a copper alloy full jacket."

According to Weisberg - Proffman and the authors they consulted the fragmentation of the head-wound bullet indicated a "lead or soft metal bullet" (Presumed Guilty, p. 116). In short, the medico ballistics evidence on November 22, 1963

suggested two guns and in this regard was "consistent with," as the lawyers say, the evidence of the Zaprunder film.

That, of course, was contrary to the prepared script of a lone assassin. The directors of the melodrama had to dispose of the contradictory evidence. The Zaprunder film could not be changed. But the frames derived from the film were another matter. A few were excised; one was duplicated and inserted in the sequence following impact of the fatal head shot, creating confusion and doubt about the authenticity of the entire sequence. and the film was ignored while the frames were utilized to speculate about the spacing of the shots and other distracting matters. In this logerdemian the government was aided by critical experts and professionals who also ignored the conclusive evidence of the film to haggle pontifically over the details and the prestidigitator's jatter.

At the same time the medico ballisthe evidence was "restructured" to accommodate the Commission's inescapable need to rationalize the frame up of Oswald. In the process the back wound bullet - a copper jacketed

missile - went through Kennedy and penetrated
Connolly in whom, in shattering bone and fragmenting
in part, it acted, alas, like a "lead or soft nosed
bullet" — if Weisberg, Roffman, et al are correct.

I say "if" because the radio (CBS) has just carried the news
of Dr. Milton Helpern's testimony as a rebuttal witness
for the plaintiffs in the Kent State - shooting suit. Whereas
an expert had testified for the defense to the effect certain
wounds suffered by one of the victims of that domestic,
small-scale My Lai massacre on a university campus
in 1970 ~~Helpern offered~~ could not have been made by
bullets fired from weapons used by the Ohio National
Guard, Helpern offered testimony affirming the
possibility.

'T is always thus: lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists,
firearms experts, forensic "scientists" and unnumerable
other authorities are always interpreting evidence
contradictorily in a serio comic parallel of the
American two-party system which enthrones
corrupt demagogues in seats of power. Truth is
their common victim. The corpse is eulogized as
"justice."

Yet there are those who condemn political
analysis and the historian's approach. Ah,
well, keep probing, but beware of "restructuring."

What are the details about Buckley's non-appointment
as Kennedy's physician? You whet my appetite.
Feed me.

Hungry,
Thomas Stamm

Providence tour, Aug. 19, 1975

Ms J. Magister
c/o Postmaster
Ocean Beach
Fire Island
New York



Stamm
69
27

630 Commercial St
Provincetown, Mass 02657

