

12 June 1965

Dear Mr Rankin,

I should be very glad if you would clarify some questions which arise from a comparison of assertions in the Warren Report with the corresponding source material in the Hearings and Exhibits. I am engaged in carrying out such a comparative study with a view to publication; naturally, I do not wish to draw conclusions on the basis of the published material alone which may prove unwarranted or unfair in the light of clarifications which you may be able to provide. I shall limit myself in this letter to questions which arise in the final paragraph on page 95 of the Warren Report.

According to the paragraph, all the evidence indicated that the bullet found on Governor Connally's stretcher could have caused all his wounds. This assertion appears to be in conflict with the testimony of Dr Shaw (4H 113), Dr Humes (2H 374-376), and Dr Finck (2H 382). Can you indicate why the opinions of these medical witnesses were discounted? I can appreciate that there may have been good reason to disqualify their testimony on this specific point but I believe that you will agree that the categorical reference to "all the evidence" creates an unfortunate impression when posed against that testimony, in the absence of mention in the Report of the opinions rendered by the three doctors together with an indication of the Commission's reasoning in reaching a contrary conclusion.

In the last sentence of the same paragraph, an assertion is made as to the independent opinion expressed by the three doctors who attended the Governor at Parkland Hospital that a single bullet had caused his wounds. The footnote refers to the March 23, 1964 depositions of Mrs Gregory, Shaw and Shires, but not to the testimony of Drs Gregory and Shaw on April 21, 1964 before the Commission. It appears from the later testimony that Dr Shaw, at least, clearly retracted his earlier opinion and indicated that two or even three bullets might have caused the Governor's wounds (4H 109). Commissioners Dulles and McCloy questioned Dr Shaw specifically on this point and explicitly acknowledged their understanding of his change of opinion, which he confirmed in his replies to their questions. In the light of this, do you consider that the assertion in the final sentence in the paragraph—which is literally true but maintains silence on the later change of opinion by one of the three doctors—can be defended? I would be less than honest if I did not say that the discrepancy between the Report and the testimony in this instance creates great uneasiness, if not alarm.

I am sure that you will agree that it will be a service to all concerned to clarify these issues as soon as possible, and I hope that you will do so by early letter or by telephone if you prefer [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher