

So now when I don't put in something you want me to throw in, it's again part of a sly attempt to cover up your contribution. Nonsense. I simply have never been able to verify with my own eyes the turn-interruption you are talking about. I'd be delighted to see; in fact, I would even expect it to be there.

January 7, 1968

Mr. Raymond Marcus  
1249 HiPoint Street  
Los Angeles, California 90035

Dear Ray,

I'm sorry that you found it impossible to accept my gift of a copy of Six Seconds and found it necessary to send it back to me. I'd very much like to have a copy of your The Bastard Bullet. Vince was kind enough to give me a copy about a year ago, but apparently it has been misplaced and thus I'm unable to refer to it now. If you could send me a copy I'd appreciate it.

I suppose I could write you a letter back of the same scale and tone as the 23 page document you sent me. But I really don't have the inclination or stamina for it. More importantly, even though you have been charging that I'm a CIA agent (a charge which is as malicious as it is silly) I don't feel any particular personal animosity towards you. I don't know you personally, but I know that you are held in high regard by people such as Vince, M.S. Armoni, and Sylvia -- people whom I admire and whose judgement I trust. And as I mentioned before, what I know of your work would lead me to believe that you were one of the pioneers in the field whose labors have generally gone unheralded. Thus it's painful to me that you feel such obvious animosity towards me, when I have no reciprocal feelings towards you.

What I'd like to do now is to simply give you the facts as I understand them with respect to the ten points mentioned in your Summary. I'll take them in reverse order:

- 10) "Your inclusion of the time-constraint argument (page 156) to preclude President Kennedy's stretcher as a locus of Tomlinson's discovery of bullet 399, probably constitutes plagiarism (pg 16 of "Bastard Bullet")."

Doris Nelson at Parkland Hospital originally gave me this idea by telling me on November 2, 1966 that the President's stretcher remained in TR 2 until after the presidential party left the hospital. I believe her remark is contained in the recapitulation of that day's interview's tape-recorded by Patsy Swank and me on the evening of the 2nd or thereabouts. This piece of information seemed to me to be critical, because on the basis of it we could know the President's stretcher could not have been moved into the hallway. I was not aware that you had advanced a parallel argument in The Bastard Bullet.

- 9) "Your use of a section title "Which Stretcher" (pg 154) knowing that it was identical to a chapter title in my book, is unethical at best; and probably constitutes plagiarism."

Seems to me that it's a rather obvious section title if you're discussing which stretcher was involved in the finding of the bullet. Actually, if I'd known you had already used the phrase I would have tried to think up something jazzier for a section title. I, of course, didn't have your book "on my desk" as you suggest. I looked through it when Vince gave it to me, thought it was a good job, but never did read it as a matter of fact. This may strike you as scandalous. Actually, I've never read through the whole Whitewash series or even finished reading Rush to Judgment. This is because I find the reading of primary material more rewarding than secondary stuff.

- 8) "Your footnote on page 149 of your book, raising the question of a high-speed fragment from a low-speed bullet was plagiarized from page 72 of my book."

If I had thought an attribution for this point necessary, it would have gone to Ed Kern. This point was brought up in discussion by him, and we argued about it constantly. Last May I even sent Ed a card from the Dallas airport telling him that Shires had confirmed that the fragment was "embedded" in the femur. I don't know where Ed got the idea; I presume his reading of testimony brought it to his attention. I wasn't aware you had reached a similar conclusion until your letter arrived.

- 7) "Your writing of the 314-315 frame transposition (pg 89), in a context which would not permit the uninformed reader to conclude the discovery was not your own, constitute plagiarism."

- 1) "Your failure, in your article (pg 46) to credit me with the 238 shoulder-dip leads readers to believe the discovery was your own. This is plagiarism."

It seems, and it has seemed, to me that on this point you have a fair bitch. The shoulder dip is important, damned important, and you should properly be credited with discovering it. I wrote a letter to the Post, and later called the letters to the editor desk to extract a promise to publish the letter reproduced below. And as I told you before, I regret that you have felt yourself injured by our unwitting oversight of an attribution which in all fairness should have been included.



Dear Sir:

The lack of footnotes in my article may have given readers the mistaken impression that two important discoveries were my own, when in fact they were made by other researchers. It was not I, but Raymond Marcus of Los Angeles, who first noticed the buckle of the governor's shoulder at Zapruder frame 238. This collapse, one of three indices of a bullet hit at this point, was first spotted by Mr. Marcus in the spring of 1965 and is noted in his monograph The Bastard Bullet. Another important fact—namely, that all the Secret Service agents accompanied the motorcade to the hospital—was first discovered by Sylvia Meagher of New York City and is mentioned in her book, Accessories After the Fact.

JOSIAH THOMPSON  
Haverford, Pa.

At the close of your letter, Ray, you make a number of demands. I am not going to dismiss these demands out of hand. I'm going to send copies of this letter to those persons on your list that I already know. And I solicit their advice as to whether I should do anything further. On the one hand I will not be bulldozed into doing anything; on the other hand I want to be fair to you. Thus I solicit the advice of knowledgeable people who are not interested parties to the dispute between us. This seems to me to be a just way to proceed and I should hope you would concur.

One final thing: At some point in the future I suspect that someone will come along to write the history of the way in which this case was broken. Richard Popkin has already suggested his interest in such a labor. When that job is done I'm sure you'll find that credit is allotted where it's due and that you will have receive a lion's share for your very significant work. Now, we're still in the midst of the battle and you shouldn't be too surprised to find the whole question of who discovered what to be of less importance than the question of what was discovered. I've made a sincere effort in my book to give attribution of earlier discovery where I knew such attribution to be due. And in the main I think I've succeeded. You are entitled to your tens of injured outrage only if your own monograph, The Bastard Bullet, made no errors of detail and contained all proper attributions. Is it really that perfect? Were there no slips of detail? Was even the teeniest discovery properly attributed? As you may know, Sylvia checked over my mss. for factual errors. She suggested one change of attribution with respect to Epstein which I made, but the rest appeared quite error-free to both of us.

I know it's difficult to think rationally about me if you think I'm a CIA agent, but Ray .... try.

Sincerely yours,

*Tink*  
Tink

CC: Vince Salandria, M.S. Aronni, Sylvia Meagher, Dick Sprague, Richard Popkin, Dave Liften, Bill O'Connell

*Sylvia: Having my reply to the News about - a genuine effort of self-credit on my part. Let me know your considered opinion as to whether any further action is required on my part. I look forward to seeing my contribution NYL.*

*Bob, Tink*