



Dept of Classics
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

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Josiah Thompson
Haverford

Dear Prof. Thompson:

Enclosed is a copy of a photograph showing the two cartridge cases in CE 557. The quality is not good, but it is sufficient to reveal the dent on the mouth of the case that I designate 557A. You may secure a ~~copy~~ of the photograph itself from the archive, where a negative is kept.

I was not able to handle the cases, but I personally observed them under a magnifying glass, and photographed features that interested me. Moreover, in going through the archive's pictures of the cartridge cases, I discovered one that was taken for a Philadelphia resident who evidently wished to compare the case mouth dents on CE 543 and Frazier's test.

If you can satisfy me that the dent occurred after you viewed the cases in January 1976, I shall be glad to accept your explanation; otherwise, I am obliged to think that you saw the dent and deliberately withheld knowledge of it. The case mouth dent is far more prominent a feature than the "chambering marks" that you describe, and it is, after all, the feature to which you attribute significance.

I doubt whether the so-called "chambering marks" were in fact incurred during the process of introducing the cartridge into the chamber. It was chiefly my interest to discover the cause of those marks, for if they are chambering marks, then Robert Frazier is in for big trouble. I am inclined to think that they, too, were caused during ejection, but I am not sure. In any case, it is best to refer to them as "shoulder dents".

It is my understanding that CE 545 is the case that was held by the Dallas police. I base this conclusion chiefly on the exhibit numbers that were attributed to it by the FBI. C6 is their designation for CE 543; C7 is CE 544; C38 is CE 545. I presume interrupted sequence occurred because they received CE 545 after they received the exhibits that they numbered C8 (which is the bulletted cartridge) to C37. I know of no other indication that CE 545 is the case that was retained by the police.

CE 545 apparently is the case that was lying separate from the other two on the TSBD floor. Indication of this is in the testimony of Joseph Nicol at 3 H 506, top of the page.

A few variable factors may influence whether or not dents occur either on the case mouth or on the shoulder. I cannot comment definitively on the shoulder dents because I am not positively certain what caused them, but the case ~~mouth~~ mouth dents may or may not occur depending, for example, on how vigorously the bolt is drawn back or on the manner in which the extractor grips the case. Undoubtedly there is also variation from rifle to rifle; some will produce dents, others not.

What disturbs me about your treatment of the dent on the case mouth of CE 543 is that you were grossly wrong about an exceedingly important issue, and that you could easily be proved wrong by anyone who took the trouble to examine the same objects that you examined, to run a few simple tests that do not require skill, and to use a little common sense.

I am satisfied that none of those three cases was used in the assassination, that all of them were deposited ~~xx~~ near the sixth floor window with the specific purpose of implicating Oswald in a crime that he cannot have committed. ~~With the~~
~~xxxxxx~~ If my own researches ~~xxxxxx~~ prove me correct, I anticipate that your slipshod treatment of the cartridge cases may be set up as a straw-man to make my material look bad. I need only cite Itek's "analysis" of the Nix film and how it was used to divert attention from Ray Marcus' analysis of the Moorman picture; you can understand the usefulness of such diversions.

I regret that I cannot apologize for treating your work harshly in my memo, for I think that it deserves it.

Yours truly,

Dick Bernabei

Dick Bernabei