

# TIME

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Dear Miss Meagher:

We appreciate your careful reading of TIME's essay, "Autopsy On The Warren Commission," and your detailed response to it. We read your letter thoroughly -- much more so than this letter will indicate, for we are going to attempt to be brief, as indeed TIME's essay was considering the magnitude of the subject.

There is conflicting material in the Warren Report, and certain questions are unanswered. Some of the most important objections were discussed in broad terms (all the technical details that would lead one to a pro or con conclusion could not be made explicit in a two page essay), and we believe that some of the questions will be debated for years, and perhaps never satisfactorily resolved. Nevertheless, as TIME's Essay stated the sum of the Report seems by far to outweigh the scattered objections, which may or may not be significant.

Point 1. The three employees who testified that they heard shots overhead. Jarman originally testified that the shots sounded as if they came from below (Hearings, Vol. III, p. 209). Later (page 211) he changed his mind "after I got to thinking about all the debris on Bonnie Ray's head... I told Hank... 'That shot probably did come from upstairs'."

Point 2. The size of Governor Connally's wound: This is one of the contradictions. We took our description of Governor Connally's back wound from the Report, page 109, where it is described as large, and from Commission Exhibit 392, which gave its measurements as 3 cm. It is true that the Report on Page 92 also calls the wound small, and Dr. Robert Shaw, who treated it testified that it was a small wound (1.5 cm.) -- but then Dr. Shaw also testified that it would have been possible for the bullet that hit the President to have inflicted such a wound on Connally (IV, p. 113).

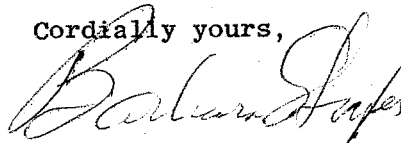
Point 3. The bullet entrance hole at the back of the President's skull. The Report notes that President Kennedy remained on his back during treatment at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, and therefore it is not surprising that the attending doctors were unaware of the small hole in the back of his skull. Concerning the witnesses at the autopsy, because they were not trained pathologists and because they apparently stood to one side, the surgeons' testimony would be preferred to theirs.

Point 4. The presumption that the bullet had exited through the tracheotomy wound. This does not seem puzzling to us. The Report states (Pages 88 and 89) that Commander Humes believed that a tracheotomy had been performed, and that the bullet had exited by this route, but this hypothesis could not be confirmed until the morning of November 23 -- after the autopsy -- when he called Parkland Hospital.

Point 5. The FBI Report. This point involves the FBI's complicated reporting methods. The fact that in December 1963 and January 1964 the FBI was still reporting that the bullet did not exit from the front of President Kennedy's neck does not necessarily imply a difference with the autopsy report. The dates of the reports indicated the dates of submission to the Commission of narratives of the FBI investigation as it had unfolded. On a regulation FBI report three dates are given: the date of the interview, the date the agent dictated the interview, and the date it was typed. By the time an interview is in final form ready for submission the agent may have gone well beyond the conclusions it contains, but it must be filed anyway. The reports to the Commission in December and January revealed the course of the FBI investigation; they did not state that the FBI believed in January everything it was told in November. However, explicit disavowals of abandoned lines of investigation are not usually issued by the FBI.

Our thanks again for your letter.

Cordially yours,



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BS/mc