

20 November 1966

Mr. Jay Schwartz
62-25 Seventh Ave.
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Schwartz,

I was most pleased to hear from you today and I do thank you and Dr. Wagner very warmly for the views you presented. I completely agree that it is a grave mistake to suggest that the case stands or falls on the contents of the autopsy photographs and x-rays, if and when they are made available to independent experts and scholars. Several of the critics, myself included, have been using every opportunity to counteract the strategy of those who try to make the autopsy photographs the exclusive or conclusive factor; and it is noteworthy that one of the proponents of that approach is an acknowledged partisan of the Warren Report, while some of the others take what is at best an ambivalent position.

Certainly the autopsy surgeon(s) are entitled to the benefit of doubt where the evidence seems to indicate misrepresentation on their part which may be inadvertent or the result of confusion or uncertainty. I appreciate that, as Dr. Wagner indicated, that forensic pathology is not immune to errors of interpretation and I agree with him that this autopsy was marked by confusion and improvisation. But I am not sure that, as he suggests, the conflicting versions of the autopsy are really reconcilable on the basis of the good faith of all parties; and if there is strong evidence, now or in the future, of deliberate falsification or destruction of evidence, the critics or most of them will make the charge.

I think it is hard to reach valid judgments by discussing the autopsy-proper in isolation; for example, during our telephone conference, we did not get to talk about the stretcher bullet, which raises a whole new class of problems which cannot really be separated from the autopsy findings.

In any case, I have taken every opportunity to stress the need to utilize the expertise of independent forensic scientists such as the non-Governmental members of the Academy of Forensic Sciences in any reinvestigation. Had I not been greatly pressed for time during the last four months, I should have written to you when I read your paper in the Journal (which I finally obtained only recently) to say how valuable and forthright it is in establishing perspective on the Report. It is immensely reassuring to know that your interest in the case remains active and that you will be available for advice and, I hope, assistance, as events develop. Please don't hesitate to call me collect at any time if there is a point you want to discuss. With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher
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