

March 21, 1981

Dear & Harold,

Thanks for all your letters and enclosures; I'll try to reply soon. I'm just popping this ~~xxxx~~ in the mail (the items requested in ~~xxxx~~ your 2/26) to beat the new postal rates. It's not the 3¢, it's the principle!!

All the best,

Paul

HW

Excerpts from a partial tape of Sandy Freeman's program on CNN (Cable News Network). (A full transcript has been requested.) Material in brackets is paraphrased, not transcribed. (However, words in quotes are exact.) Unbracketed material is verbatim. (Tape made by Bob Lewis.) [PLH 20 Jan 81]

@025

[Freeman: let me bring Purdy in. You've heard what Lifton says about the caskets.] How can you explain those differences?

Purdy: Well, [it] seems to me if anyone altered the President's body, carried it away from the autopsy itself, they could have wrapped it in another sheet; they wouldn't have had to use a body bag which was different from what they found the body in. They wouldn't have to separate the body from the brain, and also they would have to be in a position to control those people who were with the casket itself, which means that the conspiracy would have to be fairly widespread.

Freeman: But let me ask you this - do you think there were two different caskets?

Purdy: Well, I think there may have been two different caskets; I don't think that the body was altered.

Freeman: [Do you feel that the casket that was put in the ambulance for the world to see, and Mrs. Kennedy was with, do you feel that was the casket carrying the President's body?]

Purdy: I think that the body made a direct route from Dallas to Bethesda for the autopsy, and that the casket was damaged at some point - the handle was broken - and that there may have been a different casket substituted; but I believe there's no evidence to show that the body was taken from that direct route and altered in any way.

Freeman: Let me get back to my question. Do you feel that the President's body was taken in a different casket to Bethesda Naval Hospital, and not in the same ambulance with Mrs. Kennedy?

Purdy: I do not know whether or not a substitute casket was brought in another ambulance, to replace the one with the broken handle; so there may have been a second ambulance, to bring a substitute casket.

[Freeman: Did the HSC find anything about this? Was it discussed?]

@050

[Purdy: The HSC focused on the medical evidence - authenticity of X-rays and photos - interviewed everyone present at the autopsy on the wounds....]

@098

[SF: You mentioned the broken handle; where did you get that information, about that possibility (of a switch)?]

[AP: The provider of the casket asked for money because of the damage. But the 'essential point' is - what evidence is there that the wound was expanded? And the forensic pathology panel reviewed the evidence, and did not discuss or talk of any possibility that it was artificially created; and in fact when we - Mark Flanagan and I - interviewed the FBI agents that you were referring to, that talked about it being surgically operated on, they were talking about what the doctors at the autopsy were talking about they say, that the wound was so massive, and so large, that they thought it must have been surgery; but upon further questioning, it's their opinion that there was no such surgery, before it got to them.]

@112

[Break; SF reintroduces DL, and Michael Baden. (Baden is on by phone.) Dr. B., I know you have heard the conversation so far; I would like to know what your main concerns are, about Lifton's theory.]

@125

Baden: Well, I think that there is much in Mr. Lifton's book that the brief purview, perusal of it that I've been able to make; part of it, though, does depend heavily on the medical evidence, and I think ~~that~~ the concept that the wound was altered was looked at by the 9 forensic pathologists when we reviewed all of the material in the Archives, and when we spoke directly to all the physicians present at the autopsy - there were 4 physicians - we found no evidence that there had been any kind of alteration or change, in the X-rays, in the photographs, in the body; [and the Dallas observations were not of a nature and to identify wounds; the doctors] there only attempted to revive the President; they in no way examined the body for wounds; they did not [the two rear entry wounds]; all they saw on the head was a lot

of blood and tissue dried to the hair; and that's not a possible means of examining a wound; they couldn't tell if the wound was half an inch long, or five inches long, without washing away the tissues [and] blood from the hair -

[Freeman, interrupting: you bring up the point (of the change in size). (Reviews the Dallas-Bethesda descriptions of the head wound with DL.)

Lifton ... almost 5 times as large as the wound reported in Dallas, (Baden interrupts, inaudibly.) DL, continuing: and the notion - Baden: ... wound in Dallas. DL: What's that? Baden: Who reported the wound in Dallas. [DL: It's in the testimony of Dr. Carrico.] Baden: Did he examine the wound?

[DL: McClellan said he could; Perry to HSC - examined the wound after JFK was pronounced dead; recently, one doctor has said he used a flashlight to examine the wound; I can't see how you can maintain they didn't get a good look at it.]

Baden: Mr. Lifton, I will tell you from sad personal experience- [examining lots of them; can't 'properly' determine the dimension of a head wound without washing and shaving.] Doctors can get impressions, but they're not specific, legitimate, measured impressions, that document an injury. It can only be done by careful cleaning of the wound and measuring it, and the [Dallas doctors, with all that happening, missed the two entrance wounds in the back...]

@172 [SF brings Purdy back in.] Purdy: [DL's book makes it clear that there was some sort of] dialogue between himself and myself during the course of our investigation, and that's one of the reasons that we wanted to include Dr. Baden and the forensic pathology panel in examining some of these issues; we've also brought in anthropologists and radiologists and photographic experts to try to study the various materials available.

@179 [DL asks Baden about Humes asking Perry, have you made any wounds in the back.] Were you aware of that?

Baden: yeah, I was aware that - Dr. Humes called Dr. Perry, I think - DL, interrupting: What do you think that means? Baden: -two days later, which he should have done before he started the autopsy. DL: [But why do you think he asked him, have you made any wounds in the back?] Baden: Because Dr. Humes couldn't explain the perforation in the back, because he couldn't find the bullet nor the exit wound [because he didn't understand that the exit wound had been obscured by the tracheotomy; that's what they figured out on the phone, which is] not a good way to do an autopsy; but Mr. Lifton, I will agree with you 100% - that body never should have left Dallas [... illegally removed ... Rose a good forensic pathologist... errors made at autopsy out of inexperience - the bottom line, 2 shots from behind, was proper.... DL: ... You're a lawyer... Baden, I'm not a lawyer, but I do "consort with lawyers"....]

@204

@220

[Purdy: fundamental difference you point to is Dallas vs. Bethesda. Baden is pointing out that the observations at the 2 places served different purposes... It's moving and sad when you look, as we did, at the photos, some of which are reprinted, and see the magnitude of the head wound, and hear the testimony of the Dallas doctors, there was so much blood] that it must have been incredibly difficult to get any idea of the scope of that wound in the head - it was just unbelievable. [I questioned a doctor who was at the head of the table; JFK was face up; he said he saw a 'giant wound' in the back of the head; AP wondered/asked how he could see it; you see from the photos that with blood coming out, and JFK on his back, it's really hard to get an idea of the size.]

@242

[SF asks for Baden's response. Baden: faulty observations not unique; this unfortunately is common; most homicides have (such deficiencies); leads to great problems in the criminal justice system; defects in the autopsy are common.]

@252

[SF: To make it perfectly clear:] You feel the president's body was not altered? Baden: We examined all photographs, all X-rays; we interviewed all of the physicians who had any contact with the body, and all 9 of us, even Dr. Wecht, who is [the] dissenter in part of our report, agreed that there was no evidence that there was any alteration of the body between Dallas and the time the autopsy was performed in Bethesda. (End of Baden's participation.)

@300

[DL: asked Purdy about O'Connor on body bag, as in HSC volumes; Andy at first didn't know what a body bag was. SF: why didn't that get into the report? AP: talks of overall perspective; complains about DL saving things for book; hopes for an ongoing investigation.] (More, not transcribed.)