

Route 7
Frederick, Md. 21701

October 18, 1967

Dr. Robert H. Bahmer
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Service
Washington, D. C. 20408

Dear Dr. Bahmer:

In response to your letter of October 13, I respectfully repeat that the description of the material belatedly supplied by the Secret Service is not complete. It does not consist of "the originals of the papers relating to the autopsy of President Kennedy that comprise Commission Exhibit 397" and it does not include what the Attorney General's order of October 31, 1966, requires to have been deposited with you and be available for research and study.

There is no doubt that Exhibit 397 includes the autopsy notes. Shocking as it is to have to argue that the basis of the autopsy of a murdered President is in the evidence of that investigation, formally and officially, this is the case. The proof is in WHITEWASH (p.183), which cites 2H373. There is, therefore, no doubt that these were "considered by the Commission", the Attorney General's standard. They are suppressed. Suppression cannot be attributed to the Secret Service alone, for during his testimony Dr. Hymes identified what he held in his hands as "copies" of his notes. The Commission had them.

That the Secret Service elected to supply you, a year too late, in belated compliance with the Attorney General's order, with only that part of "the originals of the papers relating to the autopsy" not suppressed by the Commission makes it party to that suppression. This cannot be accidental.

To make it clear, because you resort to the phrasing, "The original papers we received from the Secret Service do not include any papers that are not shown in Exhibit 397, I reiterate two things:

Whether or not shown, these notes are part of Exhibit 397 and, on this basis alone, required to be in your custody and available;

They were "considered by the Commission" and on this additional basis are required to be in your possession and available.

It is only by a willful act that these quintessential notes were improperly removed from the exhibit when it was printed. It can be only a willful decision that removed these same notes from every version of File 371, which is identical with Exhibit 397. It can only be a willful act of government, involving more than one person, that has seen to it that there is not a single copy of these vital notes in any of the many places where they are required to be.

This is a wrongful act. Lawyers have an unpleasant description of two or more people doing a wrongful thing. It is "conspiracy". There is no reason for me to believe that your agency is in any way party to this. There likewise is no doubt about the fact of it.

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How sickening it is that the entire basis of the autopsy of a murdered President is deliberately and illeggally suppressed by the government, particularly when it is by the government that came into power because of that murder. How can this not sponsor rumors, inspire Macbethian apprehensions?

Exactly the same thing is true of the autopsy authorization. I have it on competent medical authority that autopsy authorizations are attached to them. Autopsies are medico-legal documents. Their validity and propriety must be certified. Authorizations are part of autopsy reports. In this case, by a consdious act or acts, the copies of this authorization were removed from every set of File 371, every set of Exhibit 397. The Naval Medical Center delivered this authorization with all the other papers of the autopsy. Receipt for it is certified by the Secret Service, as part of the autopsy evidence.

It accomplishes little other than to prove that you are not responsible for these unpardonable and unjustifiable suppressions (I do not for one minute believe you are) to tell me that I "may compare the original papers with the copies furnished" me, unless the intent was to leave a deceptive record.

May I point out that the use of the words "an authorization for the autopsy" is also less than precise? They suggest there might have been no such authorization. There was. It was signed by the then Attorney General.

The chaos the government has guaranteed by its mishandling of this entire investigation and the inadequate provisions it has made for examination of incomplete files gives me no alternative to addressing you, other than silence. About a matter of the gravity of this one, as crucial to the national honor and integrity, I cannot be silent.

Everything demands that I establish as accurate a record as I can.

I renew my requests for access to both the autopsy notes and this authorization and for copies of both.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg