27 July 70

Dear Howard (cc Weisberg)

Re the front-neck wound, I regard your letter of 23 July as tantamount to an invitation to go for your throat. So here I come. It involves reiterating a lot of stuff that you know, but did not consider in your letter.

If I did not actually say so, I cerainly strongly implied that if any of the Items I mentioned is false, then the conclusion that I drew is not valid. I would have uttered that conclusion less adamently if I merely thought that any of them could be false. I consider each one true and demonstrable.

Take for example the question whether JFK was hit before Z202. Two bits of information bear on this (excluding the knowledge that he was fired upon immediately before 202): the erratic movement of JFK's right arm beginning about Z 199; and the testimony of Mrs K regarding what she saw. You will surely admit that the arm movement is unusual; that the elbow rises suddenly and unnaturally in a manner that is fully consistent with a reaction to pain, and not merely to the surprise of hearing a blast (and set this notion against the background of the knowledge that the person who fired the first shot had ample time to take careful aim before firing). Mrs K testified that (or at least strongly implied in her testimony) that JFK was wounded when she first looked at him after turning her head. She saw the "quizzical" expression on his face that apparently did not change during the whole time that she looked. In other words, from the moment that she first saw him, he had that unusual expression on his face. Now, we know from the Z that she was looking at him before Z 202. Can we reasonably suppose that he had that expression on his face when he was not wounded,and that it did not suddenly change after he was wounded? I grant that neither of these considerations constitutes "absolute proof" (whatever that is), but surely there is a point beyond which the criterion "beyond reasonable doubt" is cogent to the degree of being beyond refutation. This, I think, is such a case. JFK was fired upon before Z202; he shows a physical reaction that is consistent with a response to pain; before Z 202; and Mrs K said that (before Z202) he had an expression on his face that continued into the time period when we know he was reacting to pain.

Concerning Bennett's observations, consider that when he wrote his brief report nobody but him knew that JFK had been wounded in the back. As I recall, he wrote it on the trip back to Washington from Dallas-- at least before the bady got to Bethesda. Surely he was not extrapolating someone else's knowledge, and applying it to his observations.

Two possibilities are conceivable: (a) that JFK was wounded in the back before Bennett looked at him, and Bennett saw only the hole in the clothing, not the actual moment of wounding, and (b) that Bennett saw JFK when the bullet entered his back. Of those two possibilities, I consider the first bordering on the inconceivable, while the latter is very likely. In order to understand this, you must (if you can) try two experiments: (1) Puncture a coat and shirt in the way that JFK's were perforated-- with a hole of about a quarter inch diameter. Have a hole shot into the materials, if possible. Then find someone with excellent

eyesight stationed at a distance from the garment equal to the distance that Bennett was from JFK (duplicate lighting conditions, too). Now ask that person to locate the hole in the coat (don't tell him where it is beforehand). After he tells you that he can't locate it (and he will tell you that), point out the hole and ask whether he can now see it. I doubt, even then, that he will see it. Go a bit farther now, and place a white background inside the coat simulating the shirt whose hole may have been displacedfrom the poition it had when both were punctured simultaneously. I doubt that he will see the hole even under these conditions. (2) Now try this: set up a dummy with shirt and coat and observe it while it is being shot. You will still not see the hole, but you surely will see the imact of the bullet even at much greater distances than Bennett's. The whole area within a few inches of the impact point will puff up momentarily. The effect is very evident, very easy to see, even if you do not know beforehand what is going to happen. I have seen this and know that it happens. The greater the force of the missiole, the greater will be this puffing.

Here again, why should we push ourselves back from the point of"beyond reasonable doubt"? If you try those experiments, you will understand that it is beyond reasonable doubt that Bennett saw a bullet strike JFK in the back, and that it is virtually impossible that he saw the hole after a bullet had entered the back.

And we know that Bennett was not looking at JFK at Z202.

You mention "dirty work" on someone's part. What dirty work do we know about? And on whose part? Do we not know that important dirty work cernters on the very spot in question-- the front neck wound? I thought we had agreed that we can make a "beyond reasonable doubt" case that the front-neck wound (as distinct from the incision) was visible when the corpse was at Bethesda, and that the autopsy docs knew about it from sources other than the corpse (e.g. TV news, Perry news conference, Dr Berkely Kellerman (?) and perhaps others), and that they actually saw it on the corpse. Do you agree with that? That they knew about the wound and saw it? If you agree, then it is tantamount to agreeing that it was discernible as a wound of entrance and nothing else. If it were a wound of exit, or could reasonably be represented as a wound of exit, they would have said so with trumpets blaring. They needed an exit wound, whether it be bullet or fragment. They in fact observed a wound, and in fact determined that it was an entrance wound. Nothing else explains why they should pretend that they did not notice it. They made that pretense because that wound said something they did not want others to hear. Apart from telling the truth, the alternatives were either to falsify the voice of that wound, to allege that it said something the opposite of what it actually said, or simply to muffle its voice. They elected to muffle it, for the other alternative could have disaterous repercussions for those who might issue false statements about the wound.

In addition to the indications from Zapruder, Mrs K, Bennett, and the rest that I mentioned above, the knowledge (which I consider conclusive) that the autopsy docs knew about that wound and in fact saw it compels the conclusion that it was known to be a wound of entrance and nothing else.

So in the Dirty Works Depatment, the sub-section "Front-Neck Wound" stands prominent among the cases of easily demonstrated corruption of the worst kind.

Your letter does not refute any of the points I mentioned in my previous letter, so the conclusion stands as irrefutable as ever. I would not in the least hesitate to state publicly that JFK was wounded first in the front of the neck by a shot fired from the front. In fact I have done so on several occasions. Nor would I hesitate to debate it. Nor would I hesitate to consider false any new information that "they" provide which seems to refute it. What warrant have we for trusting their evidence when they have provided nothing but lies and obfuscations all along the line? All of the bits of information that we can trust say but one thing: the front-neck wound is entrance and can be nothing else.

I know the means whereby this conclusion may be attacked. I have tried to apply them, but have found that none of them work. I thoroughly subscribe to the notion of keeping an open mind on open questions. The point is that I do not consider this an open question. I consider it settled beyond doubt. The fact that some of the data are in an incorrigeable state of confusion does not belie the fact that other data are sound and can be reasonably interpreted to yield conclusions regarding what truly happened. Will you summon the unsound and inconclusive data in refutation of data that are sound and conclusive? If so, then you should seriously examine your investigative methods.

In reading you letter further, I note this: "not knowing exactly what the dirty work covered up must be taken into account." In the case of the front-neck wound, doesn't the knowledge that the docs covered up something that they knew necessarily imply exactly what was covered up? What would be the point of a risky cover-up, of the lies and obfuscations, if the docs found an exit wound, or even a wound that could be represented ambiguously as entrance or exit? If they admitted that they saw the wound, they would be asked why they did not make histological slides from flesh at the wound margin, as they did with the back wound.

In re-reading some of this letter, I see that at times I have been arguing as thought trying to convince you that the front-neck was entrance. Evidently you believe that it was, so I think I may not have been arguing to the point. What you seem to require is absolute assurance that it was entrance and that it could not be anything else-- to eliminate all other alternatives. Frankly, I think all other alternatives are eliminated by the items that I mentioned in my previous letter.

Something just came up and I have to stop. Will write more later.

Dick