

Hal Verb  
PO Box 421815  
San Francisco, CA 94141-1815

1/4/92

Dear Hal,

I don't recall whether I told you I had address'd the JAMA atrocity. I have, in a lengthy ms Wrone is retyoing on his <sup>com</sup>puter. It gives me a vast quantity of oneside-clear paper ~~wax~~ on which I not only drafted that book but have started another and there is so much more I sometimes use it for other purposes, to save ~~energy~~ <sup>e</sup> and tress.

It happens that the sheets at the top of the stack relate to what you sent me, from Aguilar et al. Who have gone for some of the nut stuff and apparently are ignorant of my work. But I do not want to have to waste any time in responding to inquiries about the book, which I hope may be printed. So do not tell anybody, please!

I use the JAMA atrocities as the skeleton and flesh it out. Wrone says it is the most important book on the subject yet. He is quite excited by it.

I don't want to take time to go into it now but it is definitive.

If that letter gets published there will be some legitimate criticism and again I can't now take time for them. But they cite <sup>bk</sup> undependant sources and some not the original source.

I do not recall the name Mantik. But my memory is not as good and we get a very large number of names.

I was not talking about Rush who on this subject is a right-wing nut. I was talking about an article in the Academy of Forensic Sciences magazine in the 60s, soon after the assassination. I have no interest in anything Rush turns out.

I am, of course, very interested in anything <sup>VN</sup>alley says.

Hoover may have said he was firing Shanklin several times but I doubt he would have because the resulting scandal would have ruined even Hoover. FBIHQ ordered Shanklin to get that note destroyed. That was after LHO was dead, 11/24. Hoover always blamed somebody else, not himself or FBIHQ.

I doubt that Gemberling ever said he had that kind of case pending. It was not his area. Of that the word should have been probationary.

That the Chicago gang will let Morrow in characterizes them adequately. He is an obvious and complete fake.

I'll file the Aguilar letter with yours if we correspond further about it but I'd rather not take the time. They are inadequately prepared for the worthwhile thing they intend and one mistake will torpedo them.

Thanks and best,



Hal Verb  
PO Box 421815  
S.F., Ca. 94142-1815

Dec. 31, 1992

Harold Weisberg  
7627 Old Receiver Rd.  
Frederick, Md. 21702

Dear Hal:

I'm replying to your letter of 12/22/92 and will clarify certain things mentioned in my letter sent to you previously.

Before I do that I want to mention a few things about the enclosures which include the updated brochure on the April, 1993 Chicago Symposium, and the copy of the 9-page letter to the AMA dated 12/7/92.

The brochure on the Chicago Symposium needs no further comment other than to note that more and more speakers are being added to the list. As I mentioned to you previously they are strongly considering me as a speaker and my subject will be the photographic evidence. They told me they would let me know by Jan.1st. I'm confident I'll be included because as far as I know I see no one listed in the brochure who will discuss the topic as I can. You'll note they list Josiah Thompson and Tom Wilson but these two do not qualify to meet the standards I hope to present at this conference. Even if they added Groden I'd still hold to this opinion. The approach you used in "Photographic Whitewash" is precisely the way I'll go.

With respect to the AMA letter enclosed I'll fill you in on what I know and how I obtained it. I've been in touch with Dr. Gary Aguilar ever since I met him earlier this year. He allowed me to speak at a S.F. forum this past September and we keep in touch. When I called him the other day he mentioned the nature of the letter you find enclosed. I asked for a copy and he quickly responded.

I've not made a study of the contents (simply no time to do so at present) but Dr. Aguilar told me that it was his idea to publish the letter after contacting four other letter writers to JAMA who held similar critical opinions on the JAMA article. (I note that one of the letter writers not included in Aguilar's co-signers is Arthur Wilson who is a doctor from Memphis, Tn. Aguilar may have contacted him and he may have decided not to join the list. I have no way of knowing if Wilson did, indeed, turn the offer down).

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Aguilar told me he sees little possibility of JAMA publishing <sup>the letter</sup> and not because of the obvious reason that the letter is too long which is what the JAMA can use as an "official" excuse. But Aguilar's strategy is to have a record set by them of repeated refusal(s).

He then will try to persuade them to have the letter published as an article instead. If they refuse this Aguilar told me he will then try to get it printed in "The Nation" or other prestigious magazines as Harpers, the Atlantic, etc. Aguilar ~~also~~ told me he is also thinking of launching a law suit against JAMA and explained that he would like to have the AMA put in the position of divorcing itself from opinions pronounced as definitive by the Journal. I'm in no position to comment on how this could be done but this is the thought of Aguilar and presumably the doctors who would be asked to join the suit if it materializes.

I should note that Aguilar has a high regard for one of the doctors who is one of the co-signers of the letter to AMA enclosed. He is David W. Mantik from Rancho Mirage, Calif. I know nothing of him except his letter which appeared in JAMA in reply to the May issue. Do you know of him?

You had requested in your latest letter if I had a copy of the Journal of American ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCES article on Oswald in which he wrote to the CP and either the SP or SWP the same day. (In my opinion Oswald more than likely wrote to the SWP rather than the SP because at that point in time the SP had no real relevance for Oswald and the SWP did).

I assume the article you're referring to is the one foot-noted in JAMA written by J.W. Rush and M.H. West which was called ~~the~~ "Confirmation of the Single Bullet Theory". The article, I believe, was originally a video made on 2/19/92 at the Forensic meeting in New Orleans. I don't have a copy but I asked Dr. Aguilar to obtain a copy for me and he said he would and send it to me. When I get it I'll send it off to you. Incidentally, Dr. Aguilar told me that he had written Dr. West some time ago and wanted the video but West never responded. If you wish to obtain West's name and address here it is: Dr. Michael West, MD, Deputy Medical Examiner Investigator, Forrest County Mississippi, PO Box 158-46, Hattiesburg, Ms. 39402.

Now to get on to another matter I'd like to clear up with respect to the FBI agent I mentioned in my last letter to you (dated 12/19/92). You'll recall I referred to an agent who claimed he knew that Oswald was an FBI informant but that Oswald had "nothing to report".

Your letter of 12/22/92 said that there was "a problem with the 9/63 date: Oswald was not in Dallas that month". I think you may have mis-read my letter because I had said that the FBI agent was in Dallas on 11/22/63 not September.

I've learned more since I wrote you and I'll bring you up to date on what I've learned. First, I was in error when I said that the agent's name was Tom Vallee.

The FBI agent's name is: Tom O'Malley and he was from the San Antonio FBI office. He was in Dallas on 11/22/63 on "a visit" and at the time of the assassination he was in the Dallas FBI office. According to the information I have he "heard" the shots. No mention was made as to how many were heard. My source has discussed all of this with O'Malley and he claims that O'Malley is still a party man in defending the FBI even though he is no longer with the Bureau. He is currently a professor at Sacramento State College with the "Criminal Justice Department" there. O'Malley is expected to be resuming teaching at the college in about 3 or 4 weeks and can be reached then. My source said that this would be the best time to reach him and I intend doing so.

One interesting thing that my source told me was that O'Malley spent both Friday (11/22) and Saturday (11/23/63) in Dallas. He was also in the FBI room when Hoover called Shanklin and Hoover allegedly "fired" Shanklin "several times". (My guess is that the famous note Oswald delivered to the FBI warning of dire consequences which Shanklin ordered destroyed had a lot to do with the "firing" but, of course, there were other reasons).

According to my source O'Malley when asked if his name might appear in the volumes replied that he did not know but it could very well be. A researcher my source has been in touch with claimed there were three FBI reports of which one at least was an FBI report by O'Malley interviewing the cop who let Ruby in the jail to shoot Oswald. Apparently O'Malley didn't ask the pertinent question or questions he should have and was reprimanded for it. I don't recall if my source said that O'Malley may have then been dropped from the case because of his incompetency. The researcher who uncovered the information is supposed to send my source the documents on this and when he does I'll try to obtain a copy for you.

Thanks for the info on advising me to look up the FBI agent in the Directory of Former FBI Agents but now that I know who he is and where he can be located I guess there's no more need of that.

Some interesting "gossip" I heard about Jim Leavelle in a conversation I had with a researcher who is assembling a photographic research group (I've agreed to join): according to him Leavelle had a few friends over for a party and was trying to demonstrate how a pistol could be prevented from firing in an effort to duplicate the alleged event by Oswald at the Texas Theater. The attempt by Leavelle failed and he accidentally shot someone at the party. I don't know if this was reported in the press or whether he was jailed but it occurred about three weeks ago.

You mentioned in your letter that you had lost contact with Fred Newcomb. In case you need to reach him here is his latest address:

Fred Newcomb  
256 South Rodeo Avenue  
Glendora, Ca. 91740

Well, that is about all I have to relate for now. I'd be curious to know if you have anything more on FBI agent O'Malley. He may figure in this whole thing which can be useful particularly his knowledge about whether, indeed, Oswald was truly an informant. It would be interesting to see if Gemberling mentions O'Malley in his report. When I was in Dallas this past October I clearly remember a video I saw which Mark Oakes showed me and Gemberling clearly stated that he had a case "pending" against Oswald for alleged subversive activities. I may be reading more into this than meets the eye but "pending" could have been the substitute word for "probationary" since Oswald had to "establish" himself in Dallas having been there for only two months out of New Orleans. By the way I do agree with you that if Oswald were an informant it would have to be originated in New Orleans. Making him an informant in Dallas wouldn't make much sense but on a continuing basis it does make sense.

I hope the new year will prove to be a promising one that we can all look forward to.

Best,

*Hal Verb*

Hal Verb

Copy to Hal WEBER

December 7, 1992

D. Rennie and B. Dan, Editors  
JAMA  
American Medical Association  
515 North State Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Re: Letter to the editors

Dear Sirs:

We were pleased that our letters of response to Drs. Humes and Boswell, regarding the autopsy of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, were published in JAMA.<sup>1</sup> We were, however, most disappointed that all questions of evidentiary significance were ignored by the autopsists.<sup>2</sup> For individuals so uniquely placed by history to now affirm that they will forever remain silent on these issues is a great disservice to the medical community, to all Americans, and to history. If the imprimatur of scientific certainty is to be granted, as requested by Drs Humes, Boswell, Finck, and Lundberg, for their proffered information,<sup>3</sup> surely the ancient and valued tradition of responding honestly to letters of inquiry is required. Without this, the value of peer reviewed literature would greatly diminish.<sup>4</sup> As members of the medical community addressing a matter of such historic importance, most decidedly we are accountable to the wider American public. In the Kennedy assassination, most especially, an open and uninhibited scientific interchange must be permitted. Sadly, that door has now been closed, supposedly for all time. Such a total lack of response, advanced with remarkably ringing finality, can only provoke among readers the opposite of its expressed intent. Rather than trust and confidence in Humes, Boswell and JAMA, mistrust and incredulity will result.

This aura of stifling the truth was only enhanced by Humes and Boswell's deliberate absence from Lundberg's news conference announcing JAMA's forthcoming publication of their "plain truth" portrayal of the autopsy evidence in Kennedy's murder.<sup>5</sup> The impression that Humes, Boswell, and Finck are unwilling to answer questions--whether from the free press, from fellow physicians (other than from former fellow military pathologist, Lundberg), and other readers of JAMA--undermines the confidence the public should have for physicians, the AMA, its journal and its authoritative conclusions regarding this case.<sup>6</sup>

As Lundberg, himself, has advised: "It is the reader's responsibility, no matter whether an investigator, a physician, a medical reporter, or any member of the public, to read all with a skeptical eye".<sup>7</sup> He has suggested that we "...sift these data, challenge the hypotheses, results, and interpretations. And, let us hear from you."<sup>8</sup> Yet when we

sifted and challenged and wrote JAMA, Mr. Breo answered that the "...only cogent question raised by all the response..." was that Finck's interview was absent in the first JAMA report!<sup>9</sup> Is Lundberg seriously suggesting, via his surrogate, Breo, that these guidelines are to be ignored for the peer review discussion of Kennedy's autopsy? To be sure, there remain "cogent questions" that are still unanswered despite Breo's flip dismissive.

For example, if JAMA would be, in Lundberg's words, "...as correct as it is humanly possible to be...",<sup>10</sup> it might have requested that the autopsists discuss their claims in reference to the extensive work of the panel of forensic pathologists of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Their findings contradict the claims of the autopsists regarding the location of the fatal skull wound by 10 to 12 cm!<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the photographs and radiographs also contradict the claims of Humes, Boswell and Finck. We cannot imagine how Lundberg and Breo could have failed to ask the autopsists such fundamental questions, or how any peer review analysis of the data in the case could have neglected them. These contradictions were the source of the greatest and unresolved medical controversies considered by the HSCA.

There can be no disputing that there are unresolved contradictions in the data on Kennedy's autopsy, which Humes, Boswell and Finck could greatly clarify. Among the many mysteries suggested by JAMA's coverage, the following areas of ambiguity could easily be clarified by the autopsy pathologists:

- 1) If "two thirds of the right cerebrum was missing.", as Humes reported in JAMA, how could the brain in evidence weigh 1500 grams--the upper limit of normal for an intact normal brain--as the supplemental autopsy report asserts?
- 2) Frame 312 of the Zapruder film establishes that Kennedy's head was anteflexed only slightly at the instant of the fatal shot. If the autopsy exam revealed a wound of entrance "to the right and just above" the external occipital protuberance, as Humes, Boswell and Finck have claimed,<sup>12 13</sup> this would place the wound of entrance very near the base of the skull from a bullet arriving from above and to the right--assuming, of course, that the assassin was firing from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. How could this bullet enter near the external occipital protuberance and then exit through the skull defect shown at the vertex in the HSCA diagram, unless it were deflected by normal brain tissue? And how could it produce a large defect extending into the occiput, as reported by Humes and Finck, and as described by all Parkland medical personnel, and, as seen on the anterior skull radiographs?<sup>14</sup>
- 3) Humes, Boswell and Finck were apparently charged by Kennedy's personal physician, Dr Burkley, with locating bullet evidence linking the murder to the (by then captured) alleged assassin, Oswald.<sup>15</sup> While the pathologists did retrieve 2 bullet fragments measuring 7x2mm and 3x1mm, no mention is made the largest bullet fragment discernable on the currently available radiographs, a 6.5mm diameter, round object that is unavoidably obvious on the anteroposterior radiograph. This largest

fragment is seen imbedded in the outer table of the parietal bone in precisely the area examined, according to the testimony of Humes and Boswell.<sup>16</sup> Could a fragment so large and so easily retrievable, and so important evidentially, have been ignored by 3 pathologists? Would the radiologist who was present, Dr Ebersole,<sup>17</sup> have failed to bring so important an object to the attention of the pathologists for retrieval if it had been overlooked by them? It was not mentioned by any of the pathologists in their Warren Commission testimony. In fact, after reviewing the autopsy radiographs for 5 hours on 1-26-67 all 3 autopsists signed a statement declaring that "...careful examination at the autopsy, and the photographs and X-rays (sic) taken during the autopsy, revealed no evidence of a bullet or of a major portion of a bullet in the body of the President ...".<sup>18</sup> This peculiarity has taken on increased significance because the technologist who took the radiographs, Jerrol Custer, claims that the current radiographs are forgeries.<sup>19</sup> If the current radiographs are forged and are not those studied by the 3 autopsy pathologists and radiologist the night of the autopsy, that could explain how so large and obvious a fragment might have been neither retrieved nor mentioned by the autopsists. Do Humes, Boswell and Finck recall seeing this 6.5mm round fragment in the "cowlick" area of parietal skull on radiographs examined during the autopsy, where current radiographs show such a fragment? If they did, why, as Dr Petty wondered in questioning Humes before the HSCA,<sup>20</sup> did they not retrieve it while exploring this precise area, given Burkley's request? Why did Dr Ebersole, the radiologist, not recall seeing this fragment when questioned about it twice (on November 2 and December 2 1992), by one of us (Dr. Mantik)?

4) On three occasions, Humes, Boswell and Finck have stated that the fatal entrance wound was near the external occipital protuberance (EOP). To the right and just above the EOP to the Warren Commission, to the right and just below the EOP to the HSCA,<sup>21</sup> and to the right and just above the EOP in JAMA. The available photographs and radiographs, if true representations, indicate that Humes, Boswell and Finck erred by 10 cm to 12 cm--an enormous discrepancy. That is, the photos and radiographs if authentic show the fatal entrance wound at least 10 cm above where the autopsists claim it was.<sup>22</sup>

In their House Select Committee testimony, Boswell, with Humes at his side, twice asserted that a fragment of bone brought late to the autopsy fit a defect in the occipital bone surrounding the fatal entrance wound.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Boswell stated that it was the bevelling on the inner aspect of precisely this fragment that allowed them to determine that the "inshoot" had occurred so low in the occipital bone.<sup>24</sup> Do the autopsy pathologists recall a defect in the occipital bone that was made whole with the arrival of a bony fragment the night of the autopsy? Significantly, no defect in the occipital bone is seen on the current lateral radiograph. The radiographs were taken before the autopsy had begun and, presumably, at a time when the defect in the occipital bone was present, according to Boswell and Humes' testimony.<sup>25</sup> Were there two traumatic defects in the skull at the beginning of the autopsy, one the entrance defect in the occipital bone reconstructed with the arrival of the fragment mentioned above, and the second a large exit defect, or was there a single continuous, large "temporo-parietal-



occipital" defect as described by Finck?<sup>26</sup> If there were two separate defects, what was the separation between them? How wide was the occipital portion of the large skull defect mentioned by Dr Boswell?

5) The autopsy report describes "...a (note the singular form of the indefinite article) large irregular defect of the scalp and skull on the right involving chiefly the parietal bone but extending somewhat into the temporal and occipital regions. " How can this be reconciled with the photographs which show no defect even remotely close to the occipital region? This question is very important since the photographer who took the photographs, Floyd Reibe, claims the photographs currently available are also forgeries.<sup>27 28</sup>

The evidence Humes, Boswell and Finck have given to JAMA, the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee on Assassinations appear to support Reibe's stunning allegations of forgery and to undermine the conclusions of the panel of forensic pathologists of the House Select Committee which accepted the photographs as valid.<sup>29</sup> Is that their intent? Humes himself categorically denied the legitimacy of the higher skull wound, whose existence is "proven" by the photographs and radiographs. Reviewing a photograph of the back of the skull showing a high wound of entrance before the HSCA, Humes protested, "I can assure you that as we reflected the scalp to get to this point there was no defect corresponding to this in the skull at any point. I don't know what that is (referring to the higher wound seen on the photos). It could be to me (sic) clotted blood. I don't, I just don't know what it is, but it certainly was not any wound of entrance."<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the House Select Committee's panel of pathologists reported that Finck "believed strongly that the observations of the autopsy pathologist (sic) were more valid than those of individuals who might subsequently examine photographs."<sup>31</sup> This implies that Finck also disputed the photographic "proof" of an entrance wound high in the skull. How do the autopsists reconcile the striking discrepancy between their localization of the fatal wound and contradictory photographic evidence?

Indeed, why, in a second interview before the House Select Committee's panel of forensic pathologists, did Humes abandon his prior low location to endorse the forensic panel's 10-12 cm higher location of the fatal wound "proven" to them by the photographs and radiographs?<sup>32</sup> Why has he reversed himself again and decided that the lower location of the fatal wound was right after all in his JAMA interview, even though he places that wound at a different low location ("just above" the EOP) than he did in testimony before the House Select Committee (1 cm or 2 cm "below" the EOP)?<sup>33</sup>

6) Was the cerebellum visible through the skull defect? How is it conceivable that no one on the Warren Commission or on the HSCA even ventured to ask such a rudimentary question? Seven Parkland physicians have reported seeing cerebellum through the skull defect: Drs. Baxter, Carrico, Clark, Jenkins, McClelland, Peters and Perry.<sup>34</sup> In particular, Dr. Kemp Clark, the neurosurgeon, in a handwritten note

reported both cerebral and cerebellar tissue. Many of these physicians were asked to confirm this in their sworn testimony, and no one recanted.<sup>35 36</sup>

7) Why was the designation "14 cm" on Dr Boswell's diagram in dark blue ink, while the remainder of the diagram was entirely in pencil? When was the "14 cm" notation inserted?

8) On January 27, 1964, during a Warren Commission executive session, J. Lee Rankin, while holding photographs, stated that the bullet entered below the shoulder blade.<sup>37</sup> This agrees with the accounts given by: 1) Burkley in his death certificate that the wound was to the right of the 3rd thoracic vertebra,<sup>38</sup> 2) the autopsy diagram of Boswell, which was signed as "verified" by Burkley,<sup>39</sup> 3) the eyewitness testimonies of SS Agent Clint Hill, FBI agents Silbert and O'Neill,<sup>40</sup> 4) the verbal description given twice by the attending radiologist, Dr Ebersole, to one of us (Dr Mantik), and 5) the corroboration that the bullet holes in Kennedy's jacket and shirt were 5 inches below the collar, while at the moment of bullet impact photographic evidence shows that his jacket was not "riding up" and distorting the clothing evidence regarding the location of bullet entrance.<sup>41</sup> Was the back wound where Burkely placed it, to the right of the third thoracic vertebra, in the recollection of Humes, Boswell and Finck?

9) Do they believe the "Single Bullet Theory"--that a single bullet caused both Kennedy's and Connally's non-fatal wounds in 7 passes through skin and muscle, pulverizing a 5 inch segment of Conally's rib, and passing through his wrist while fracturing the widest portion of the radius bone yet remaining virtually undamaged? Humes and Finck strongly disagreed with this theory in their interviews before the Warren Commission.<sup>42 43</sup> Yet they seem to say the opposite in JAMA. If they changed their mind, what new evidence caused them to change?

10) Humes and Finck insisted in JAMA that there was no interference in the President's autopsy. While testifying under oath in the Shaw trial, however, Finck was asked why he had not dissected the track of the bullet wound in Kennedy's back, an elemental aspect of an autopsy in a shooting. He responded, "As I recall I was told not to but I don't remember by whom." Moments later he was pressed, "But you were told not to go into the area of the neck, is that your testimony?" He answered, "From what I recall, yes, but I don't remember by whom."<sup>44</sup> Taking a major departure from customary autopsy protocol because one is "told not to" seems to be interference. Can the autopsists maintain this was not interference?

11) How can the current photographic collection purport to be a full complement when Humes himself reports taking great care to obtain at least one photograph of the right apical pleura, which was bruised? This photograph is absent. If an extra photograph was inserted to maintain a full complement, which one is it? Is it a posterior view of the head?

12) On Boswell's face sheet diagram the anterior to posterior length of the skull defect was labelled as 17 cm with the designation "missing". (Author David Lifton reports that Boswell told him in 1979 that the measurement was made by him using a centimeter scale.<sup>45</sup>) If this defect starts near the coronal suture, it necessarily must extend far into the occipital bone (which is also consistent with the autopsy report). Even the use of Hume's smaller 13 cm measurement necessarily extends the large defect into the occiput on skull models. Dr Ebersole locates the posterior border large skull defect as 2-2.5 cm lateral to the smaller occipital entry wound (which was near the EOP). All 3 of these physicians' descriptions are in gross anatomic disagreement with the current posterior head photograph, which shows no sign whatsoever of a large skull defect. Who should be believed: the eyewitness testimony of 4 physicians (the autopsists and Ebersole), or a photograph whose authenticity has been denied by the photographer himself (Reibe)?

13) The current posterior head photographs show no large defect. Is this what the pathologists saw? It is astounding that they were not asked this question. On the one issue raised (the site of the bullet entry) their recollections were, in fact, vastly different.

14) Why was the brain not sectioned coronally? When did Humes intend to do this if not for the supplemental autopsy report? Surely by that time (December 6, 1963) he could leisurely have reviewed standard forensic pathology protocols and would have known that such sectioning was an essential component of a full report. Also given the absence of urgency in the examination of the brain, why did Humes not request an AFIP consultation for a definitive pathologic study of the brain?

15) The JAMA interview makes frequent use of phrases rarely found in scientific papers: "irrefutable proof", "foolproof", "blatantly obvious". (The authors challenge the reader to find similar terminology in any contemporary JAMA articles.) The autopsy report, however, makes liberal use of the word "presumably", even when describing such critical items as wounds. Have Humes and Boswell made new discoveries since the autopsy which increase their scientific certainty? If so, an opportunity to share such discoveries should not be missed.

16) The trail of bullet fragments reported by Humes began at the external occipital protuberance. Ebersole has confirmed that these tiny fragments did extend from the occiput toward the right forehead, which is consistent with Humes testimony. The current lateral radiograph, however, shows them much higher near the vertex. Which version is correct?

17) The HSCA reported that the back wound had an abrasion collar at the inferior border. Did the pathologists see this? It was recognized by the HSCA that this implied a rising bullet. The HSCA also reported that Kennedy was leaning forward by only a few degrees. Did this bullet then enter him going superiorly? If so, how did it then

reverse course, without striking bone (as everyone agrees), and enter Connally going downward?

18) Why does the autopsy report describe Kennedy as falling foreward (by implication, from a rear fatal head shot) while the Zapruder film shows him violently propelled backward? The autopsists were also told that the lone assassin, Oswald, had been apprehended and that he had fired at the president from above and to the rear. Were the autopsists influenced in their conclusions by this information? Who told the pathologists that Kennedy fell foreward with the fatal shot?

19) Why are there no photographs of the brain in the skull? Were any photographs taken before manipulations had been performed?

20) Were the skull radiographs taken before or after the brain was removed, or both? Do the extant radiographs purport to contain brain?

As a final question to Lundberg: Were outside consultants used by JAMA to analyze the data given by Humes, Boswell and Finck, JAMA's standard peer review process?<sup>46</sup> If so who were they and what are their qualifications?

We hope that raising these issues will invite additional expertise to examine unsettled aspects of the autopsy and will promote additional clarification. We harbor little hope that our queries, even if fully answered, will quiet all doubters, since there seems to be an unlimited supply. We do, however, share with Lundberg an abiding faith in the peer review process. We hope that the full exercise of that process, which Lundberg has long championed, will leave physicians, the American Medical Association, its journal, and the concerned public confident that JAMA will continue to be "as correct as it is humanly possible to be".

Very truly yours,

Gary L. Aguilar, MD

Wayne S. Smith, PhD

David W. Mantik, MD, PhD

Anthony White, MD

Patricia L. James, MD

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<sup>1</sup> JAMA 1992; 268:1681-1685.

<sup>2</sup> IBID, p.1685.

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- <sup>3</sup> Lundberg GD. Closing the case in JAMA on the John F Kennedy autopsy. JAMA. 1992; 268:1736-1738.
  - <sup>4</sup> Carney, MJ, Lundberg GD. We've come a long way--thanks to peer review. JAMA. 1987; 258:87.
  - <sup>5</sup> New York Times; 5-20-92, p.A-1.
  - <sup>6</sup> Lundberg HD. Closing the case in JAMA on the John F Kennedy autopsy. JAMA. 1992; 268:1736-1738.
  - <sup>7</sup> Lundberg GD. Providing reliable medical information to the public--caveat lector. JAMA 1987; 262:945-946.
  - <sup>8</sup> Lundberg GD. MRFIT and the goals of The Journal. JAMA 1982; 248:1501.
  - <sup>9</sup> Breo DL. Letter "In Reply". JAMA. 1992; 268:1684-1685.
  - <sup>11</sup> House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Washington, DC; US Government Printing Office; 1978; 7:245-265.
  - <sup>12</sup> Breo DL. JFK's death--the plain truth from the MDs who did the autopsy. JAMA 1992; 267:2794-2803.
  - <sup>13</sup> Breo DL. JFK's death, part III--Dr Finck speaks out: 'two bullets, from the rear'. JAMA. 1992; 268:1748-1754.
  - <sup>14</sup> HSCA. Washington, DC; US Government Printing Office; 1978; 7:260.
  - <sup>15</sup> HSCA. Washington, DC; US Government Printing Office; 1978; 7:263.
  - <sup>16</sup> HSCA. Washington, DC; US Government Printing Office; 1978; 7:254.
  - <sup>17</sup> Brio DL. JFK's death--the plain truth from the MDs who did the autopsy. JAMA 1992; 267:2797.
  - <sup>18</sup> Military Review. Report of the three autopsy doctors after review of the autopsy photos and X-rays in January 1967. A public document available at Justice Department. Referred to in: Lifton DS: Best Evidence. Best Evidence. New York, New York: Carroll & Graf; 1992:721. Copy available from Gary Aguilar, MD.
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  - <sup>21</sup> HSCA. Washington, DC; US Government Printing Office; 1978; 7:246.
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