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WAG-2034

20734

5/25/66

Dear Larry,

If I correctly read your expression this morning and understood your unspoken thoughts you are now unhappy about having said you'd buy the bibliography and pay my parking and cab expenses getting it and seeing you.

However you want it will be okay. I was going to buy the bibliography eventually anyway, only I'd have delayed it for a while and would not have incurred the extra expenses.

The total is \$45.10, for which receipts on most are attached. Of this \$37.00 is for the bibliography. If you'd like me to keep that, the parking and cabs come to \$8.10. At least one of the receipts is for more than I listed, but the extra time was not spent in getting the bibliography.

The two documents in the autopsy file about which I phoned you that prove the file is incomplete are the Secret Service inventory and the receipt signed by his superior for the papers Humes turned over. I'm getting Xeroxed copies tomorrow. If, as I do not suppose, Dick is interested in them, you are welcome to borrow and use them. And if, as I also do not suppose, he is interested in how a similar autopsy in the District, with a man somewhat less important than the President of the United States, was conducted recently, you can get the information by phone from the coroner's office, LI 6-6913. This involved a man killed by the police in a knifing case. The question of which of two bullets killed him was resolved by taking the body apart and tracing the path of both bullets. I was assured this is the normal and not at all rare practise where there is any question at all.

So you will have no apprehension, I am quite willing to keep and pay for the bibliography. I have already found it worthwhile, even though most of the listings are without meaning. It reveals, for example, which Commission staff members examined some of the documents, often on what days. It also contains, in the small proportion I have examined, other potentially interesting information, and in the course of time I plan to go over it carefully, when I can.

Sincerely,

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WAS-2034

20734

May 25, 1966

Dear Dick,

Appropos of our discussion of the autopsy yesterday morning, I thought you might like to compare it with that given his alleged assassin. You will find it in Appendix C of Dallas Justice, a dozen pages beginning on page ~~1234567~~ 277.

Hastily, I would like to call your attention to the high precision throughout, to the nature of the forms and their requirements, to the function of the "body diagram" and the exactness with which wounds are located, from the midline, as I told you, not from the really meaningless outside, and from the closest extremity, not from a more flexible mid-point bearing minimal anatomical relationship and maximum flexibility to the point of the wound.

Prior to writing this chapter I consulted lawyers in public service who deal with such matters. An autopsy is a precise thing, and measurements on charts are required to be precise and meaningful, not miscellaneous rough notes.

On the Oswald charts, what I take to be reasonable efforts are made to give the proper measurements, as on page 286. Even a cross-section of the wound is carefully presented (page 260), much more important and totally lacking in the President's autopsy.

Note also that unlike the President's ~~two~~ day autopsy report for an autopsy allegedly completed within three hours of its beginning, this one was ordered at 1:55 p.m. and completed, ready for the writing, at 2:45 p.m. (p 277)

Further unlike the President's, which first saw the light of day ten months later, the order for this one specified distribution, and this distribution included police, legal and public health authorities.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

p. 284/

5/24/66 Tried off and on all afternoon to reach Marion Johnson at Archives, as per yesterday p.m. arrangement. No one knew where he was and at no point was there any message, even after I had asked that if anyone could they get one. He had been at a ceremony yesterday p.m., even though we had arranged for me to be there to pick up any Xeroxing that had been done. When I finally got him, he said they had been able to do no Xeroxing. I presume Post was using the apparently only list. I left word with a Mr. Allen who answered his phone about 4:30 that I'd call in the morning and would appreciate it if a meaningful message were left for me, that I'd prefer not to go down there and kill time. Yesterday we made an arrangement for seeing the pictures, hopefully in the a.m.

Bumped into Wolff 23 a.m. He had read book, impressed, interested and "much better written that you had led me to believe."

At about 3:30 p.m. when I was looking for Johnson I walked into an open office near his. The woman who was there asked me, "Are you the FBI man who has been trying to reach Mr. Johnson."

Today I went to both Dallas Papers. Morning News, Karen Klinefelter, not interested. Times Herald, Mrs. Mayer, "Just didn't see how I could pull a story out of it." NY Post, office boy, no response. Hasn't seen anything in paper.

Last Friday Stern told me three reporters had been assigned to story. He introduced me to only Dick Harwood. It was Harwood's suggestion that he read the book over the weekend and that we get together Monday a.m. Some time after I arrived there he and I did. He apparently had read or glanced at 2 chapters, Set-up and Shots. He immediately informed me he could not agree with my statement that Oswald could not have shot the President and then that he had been in the Marines, and a sharpshooter was a very good shot. I asked him to show me where I had said Oswald could not have shot the President and he finally came up with the passage where I said that the Commission's own best evidence proved Oswald could not have fired three such accurate shots in the brief period he allegedly had. To which Harwood said one had not been accurate, I showed him the Marine Commandant's letter, and he said "The Commission's expert said it was an easy shot." I replied that a sergeant had said this, when consulted by the Commission after it didn't like the official evaluation of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, that Oswald when last tested had barely qualified at all and that there was no evidence of any practise in the long interval. This morning he informed me I was wrong in the chapter on the autopsy. I asked him if he had read it and he said he hadn't but he had read the autopsy. If the doctors said in the autopsy the President was shot in the neck, he was shot in the neck. I was wrong and so was everything else that proved this. No, he could not muster a single bit of evidence in support of the autopsy statement, and he didn't know of the statements by the same doctors contradicting it, which I read him, but none of this made any difference, nor did the discipline of these doctors as forensic medical experts, nor did the normal requirements of autopsies, and Finck's chart was just hen-scratches not intended to record anything except the measurement of 14 cm, that the point locating the wound in the back had no meaning whatsoever. He had seen the autopsy file. I contained only what the volume contained. Not a single note of any kind, no measurements on scraps of paper, no medical notations, and the covering letter. This did not seem at all strange to him, nor did the unaccounted burning of any papers, nor the substantive changes in the autopsy, not alone about the neck wound, and the President's tailored coat could easily have risen six inches, as could have his shirt, and only a single hole would have been left. I gave Stern the letter I had written him, the carbons, he said he could see no objection to mailing them (Hoover and Rowley), I expressed my misgivings and left. We arranged for me to check back in case they wanted me. They didn't. I'm to check at 11 a.m. I found it hard to believe a reasonable man could blindly insist fact meant nothing if he didn't like it, even if he could muster not a single competent fact in opposition to it. I am surprised he hasn't read the book.

5/20/66 - Philippe de Bausset or Paris-Match, according to Michel Anfrol, of the French Broadcasting System, is reading the book and is interested

Tony Howard will give a copy of the book and speak to him about it Sunday. He hasn't heard from or spoken to Lippmann.

After many, many calls over the past months, got through to Izzy Stone, who said he wasn't interested and was busy with his Vietnam book. He said he was thoroughly "bored with the whole Warren business" and with Lane's which he apparently had read. I suggested that Lane was not the end and that there might be other things involved, such as Earl Warren and assassins running free. He finally agreed to take a quick look at the appended materials and the last chapter and I left a copy for him at his newsstand.

Clayton Fritchey, of Newsday, was "too busy" to do anything with the book, which I had left for him and he apparently had at least glanced at. Newsday will not, in his opinion, touch the subject.

AFP moved a story, or the correspondent who shares the office did.

Heffernan, chief of Reuters: they did nothing because the US press didn't. When I asked the man at the desk, like news editor, if this was not an effective mechanism for news suppression and an odd standard for news judgement he remained silent.

Dallas Times-Herald, Kinch, No. 2 in off. Mrs. Mayer (pronounced Meyer) spent five hours in one day checking my book against original material, which they have in office. He thinks little chance, but we spent a long time talking about it.

Priestland at BBC had an attitude that went farther than Reuters. He also pointed out the news of major interest in Britain that was breaking, strike, Rhodesia, etc.

Post- Dan Kurzman going to DR for two weeks. Busy day. Larry Stern said they would do story, would credit me and book, would not use my material in any way more than as in review without paying for it, that they were assigning three reporters to story and they would go to Archives. I am to get microfilm, for which they will pay, and they will print copies for them and me. Dick Harwood will read book over weekend. He sees no point in repeating me. I told Stern I had located two doctors in area and suggested we begin with a talk because I had already given much thought to what next. As of then they had not decided to serialize book, had not decided against it, and in Stern's opinion, at that moment the attitude was negative. He gave no reason but inferred it was adjectives, sarcasm. I said that was a matter for blue pencil and he agreed. He understands I am free to make deal elsewhere but that I'd prefer them and he knows why - approach etc. Told him of and read Lane's letter to Dan. Apparently thinking I had some fears, Stern said I now had a solid and powerful friend "right here", pointing to newsroom floor. Willens had been "evasive" according to Dan. Stern was too busy for us to talk long at one moment. He reported Willens's apprehensions over Epstein book, fearing it might in fact seek to make him the goat. Apparently those who spoke to Epstein, at least for the most part, thought he was but a student working on his doctorate. Some, as Stern reported it, of the more conservative side, appear to have opened confidential files to him and to have attempted to pin the rap on the liberal side. I told Stern I thought my book, now more than ever, was the best mechanism for bringing the truth out and in perspective, that I'd be glad to talk to Willens if he so desired, that I'd talk with him on or off the record, that I'd make a tape of not as he saw fit, and would give it to him if he desired. He gave Willens the book to read over the weekend and indicated Willens indicated he might not get it done. I also told Stern because I had strung along with them so long, although I'd not turn down a good offer, I'd do what I could to get them to decide affirmatively and there might be some means I could use.