

Lifton / Army

Col. William K. Cowan
AFIP
Washington, D.C. 20306

3/14/81

Dear Col. Cowan,

AFIP-JA

Your letter of March 11, responding to mine of March 4, referring to your letters of February 17 and 27, leaves an ambiguity I do not want to leave for the historical record: "There are no records or documents responsive to your requests. There are no records or documents at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology concerning the referenced matter." The referenced matter is "Kennedy Assassination."

This does not state that there never were any pertinent AFIP records and it does not state that any such records were not either transferred elsewhere or destroyed.

I find it impossible to believe that there never were any AFIP records of any kind when one of the three doctors in charge of the autopsy was an AFIP expert, head of its Wounds Ballistics branch.

My request actually covers all records pertaining in any way to the autopsy or to any later interest in it, and this same expert, Col. Pierre A. Finck, was involved in a later review and also was called as a witness in the case of Louisiana v. Shaw. There also was considerable controversy that involved Colonel Finck.

Under FOIA, if AFIP knows where pertinent records are located, it is supposed to refer my requests. In the absence of any such referral, a proper response would state whether or not any pertinent records had been destroyed or transferred elsewhere.

It also is not easy to believe that when there is a current, best-selling book and extensive promotions and other efforts to attract attention to it and its contents, and when that book alleges that, the President's body was altered to corrupt the autopsy, at Walter Reed and/or AFIP, there is no pertinent record. My request includes all information provided to David Lifton in response to his requests.

May I please have an unequivocal statement from you?

Years ago I requested all pertinent Army records. I then was informed that the Army had had three files on the assassination and had destroyed them all, a rather remarkable record, particularly when law and regulation prohibit the destruction of records of such great historical importance. If AFIP destroyed any records it also violated law and regulations and requesters are entitled to know.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg