

4/5/69

Captain H. K. Wade,  
Deputy Chief of Information  
Department of the Navy  
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Captain Wade,

If in your letter of April 3 you intend saying that during the life of the Warren Commission the Navy felt it should make no comment, release no information on the activities of Navy personnel in connection with the murder of President Kennedy, whether or not this is agreed with it is understandable. With the end of the Warren Commission, dating to September 1964, more than four years ago, there became and there has since been no official body with the responsibilities you attribute to none but infer exists.

There are laws, there are Naval regulations, there are practices with the effect of law (and so legally recognized), to none of which you make reference. There was nothing in the tragedy or the subsequent tragedies, so many of which are unnecessary and can be traced to Navy origins, that abrogated these existing rules. The Navy has violated them. If the authority exists or existed, I would like to have it cited.

My requests for copies of those regulations and other controls over autopsies is unanswered.

My request for the proper identification, the full name and address of the admiral who is the subject of Colonel Finck's testimony is unanswered.

These are proper inquiries. The answers are answers to which I am properly entitled. If, for some reason beyond my comprehension, there is reason the Commanding Officer of the Naval Medical Center should not have answered my original letter, I believe it was proper for him to have forwarded it to whoever could and would have made proper response. Failure to respond to these simple, proper inquiries is consistent only with covering up. It is not consistent with information or freedom of information.

The Navy's (if not your) support of the letter and spirit of the "Freedom of Information" Act are well recorded, in such affairs as that of the Pueblo and the C. Turner Joy. If, as I would hope, you can provide me with what the Navy has made public on the latter incident, I would like it for at some future date I will be returning to writing to which that is appropriate. The logs of communications released to the press, including the wire services and LIFE, are of particular interest.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

IN REPLY REFER TO

3 APR 1969

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Coq d'Or Press  
Route 8  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

This is in reply to your letter of March 20th, concerning Navy records and the President Kennedy autopsy.

I did not mean to indicate in my letter of March 19th that the autopsy was not conducted by the Navy. I am well aware that it was. As I stated, the complete record was delivered to the White House and no records remain with the Navy.

As an information officer, I am aware of, and a supporter of, the Freedom of Information Act. The Navy, as an agency of the government, is responsive both to the requirements of law and the direction of higher authority. The essential point which I intended to make in my last letter, and in this one, is that the assassination of President Kennedy was a tragedy far surpassing strictly Navy interest. Although a naval unit and naval personnel played a part in the subsequent events, the entire matter is as far beyond the Navy in terms of providing information, as the fact of the event was beyond strictly naval interest.

As far as the Navy's public relations are concerned, I do not believe that the Navy "soils itself" by taking the position that appropriate higher authority deal with the information aspects of those matters within the purview of that authority.

I have no objection to your publishing either of my letters to you.

Sincerely,

*K.W. Wade*

K. W. WADE  
Captain, U. S. Navy  
Deputy Chief of Information