

2 - autopsy

adhered strictly to the autopsy performed by the witnesses, the Commission would then have been faced with/only the questions of destruction of evidence and integrity. Of course, these are, indeed, questions of great magnitude when they deal with the assassination of a president. Important as they are, however, they are minor compared with the complete and utter destruction of the Commission's report.

Together, they bring into question the integrity of the Commission itself.

The witnesses were Commander James J. Humes, Commander J. Thornton Boswell, and Lt. Col. Pierre A. Finck. ~~Boswell~~^{Humes}, who actually performed the autopsy with the assistance of the others, is Director of Laboratories of the Naval Medical School at Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. In addition to "the responsibility of the overall supervision of all of the laboratory operations in the Naval Medical Center," he has two other broad areas of responsibility, one in anatomic pathology and the other in clinical pathology. He has been trained by the armed forces in forensic pathology. Boswell, who is his assistant, is Chief of Pathology at the Naval Medical School. Finck was then, and for the previous 3 years had been, Chief of the Wound Ballistics Pathology Branch of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and previously had been certified by the American Board of Pathology in both pathology anatomy and forensic pathology.

Most of the testimony (2 H 348-76) came from Humes. Boswell (pp.376-7) and Finck (pp.377-84) confirmed Humes. But they confirmed it positively and in detail, especially on the most essential points.

The testimony of each began with the Commission's assistant general counsel, Arlen Specter, leading each witness into a detailed explanation of his scientific achievements and stature. And, of course,

3 - autopsy

each witness has earned the high station in his field that he has achieved.

Humes began his testimony by explaining the circumstances of the autopsy, the period of time consumed, and the techniques and methods. He also enumerated some of the scientists who from time to time observed.

- In the course of the postmortem examination - in fact, beginning even before the postmortem began - a number of X-rays and photographs were taken. These included X-rays of the torso, upper arms, the area of the wounds, the entire body, etc. There were a total of 15 to 20 black and white and color photographs also taken. The autopsy itself began at approximately 8 p.m. and was completed at approximately 11 p.m. The President had been completely undressed in Dallas and when removed from the casket at Bethesda, was wrapped in only a sheet.

Humes had prepared several exhibits in anticipation of his appearance before the Commission because "When appraised of the necessity for our appearance before this Commission, we did not know whether or not the photographs which we had made would be available to the Commission. So to assist in making our testimony more understandable to the Commission members, we decided to have made drawings, schematic drawings, of the situation as we saw it, as we recorded it and as we recall it. These drawings were made under my supervision and that of Dr. Boswell by Mr. Rydberg (H. A.)...", a medical illustrator in our command at Naval Medical School." (pp.349-50)

This is not the first time these pictures are referred to. At no time is the question "Why are they not used?" even raised. On several occasions, Humes says the pictures would be the best evidence. But the Commission says nothing and does nothing. Humes did not have

4 - autopsy

the pictures and he could not bring them. For example, on p.366, he said "the photographs would be more accurate as to the precise location ..."; on p.369, "photographs are far superior to my humble verbal description ..."; and on p.371, "The pictures would show more accurately and in more detail the character of the wounds as depicted ...". When asked at this point by the Chief Justice, "If we had the pictures here and you could look them over again and restate your ~~opinion~~ opinion, would it cause you to change any of the testimony you have given here?"

What could Humes say? To give anything except the obvious answer would be to condemn himself. Even so, his answer was equivocal. It was, "To the best of my recollection, (my emphasis) Mr. Chief Justice, it would not."

The fact is, the pictures were not before the Commission. They were not before the witness. And as will soon be clear, they most assuredly should have been. There is only one reason why they were not. It is clear from evidence elsewhere that the pictures would deny the testimony about the first wound.

But to return to a summary of Humes's testimony, he was describing the creation of the schematic drawings, and then explained that Rydberg "had no photographs from which to work ...". So Rydberg had to work "under our description, verbal description, of what we had observed." Asked if the photographs would have been helpful to the artist, Humes replied, "If it were necessary to have them absolutely true to scale, I think it would be virtually impossible for him to do this without the photographs."

As though he didn't realize the pit he was digging for the Commission, Specter then asks, "And what is the reason for the necessity for having the photographs?" Humes says, "I think it is most difficult to

5 - autopsy

transmit into physical measurements.../exact situation as it was seen
to the naked eye. The photographs were - there is no problem of scale
there ... proportioned to the structures of the body, and so forth,
when we attempt to give a description of these findings, it is the
bony prominences, ... which we used as points of references, I cannot,
transmit completely to the illustrator where they were situated^{ed}.

And in the very next paragraph, "In the field of forensic pathology
we have found that the photographs and X-rays are of most value ..."

In the face of this there is no reference to the photographs,
they were not produced, and, unless they had been destroyed, were
clearly available to the Commission. If the Commission had scruples
about the good taste of printing the photographs, these bore no rela-
tionship to viewing them themselves, and to allowing the witnesses
to testify with them as a basis for the testimony.

The failure of the Commission to do so can be regarded as nothing
but a brazen and undisguised suppression of evidence it feared - and
I shall prove - was contrary to its thesis.

The two drawings made by Rydberg were introduced into the record
and numbered Exhibits 385 and 386. They appear in 16 H 977, as they
relate to the first wound, and in Exhibit 388, 16 H 984, as it re-
lates to the head wound. ^{I shall} ~~Rydberg~~ again refers to these exhibits
shortly.

At the bottom of p. 2 H 350, Humes identifies a copy of what he
calls the "gross autopsy report" which he says was "completed within
approximately 48 hours after the assassination of the President".

With the exception of the separate examination of the brain which
had to remain in formaldehyde for a longer period of time, is there
any necessity, any reasonable explanation, for the delay in drafting

6 - autopsy

this report when the autopsy itself was completed less than 12 hours after the actual assassination? At least by inference I will soon return to this also.

Describing the back wound which he calls the "low neck wound" (p.351) Humes gives its dimensions as he measured them as "7 x 4 millimeters, with its long axis roughly parallel to the long axis of vertical column". In other words, it runs up and down in its longer dimension. This would indicate that the bullet entered or exited at some elevation.

Also on p.351 Humes reveals that the photographs and X-rays which he turned over to his superior were, in turn, delivered to the Secret Service. This is confirmed elsewhere in this testimony by Mr. Specter.

In examining the large area of the President's head, a considerable amount of the skull of which was missing, guided by the X-rays, they recovered "a rather sizable fragment visible by X-ray just above the right eye." Humes also referred to other smaller fragments which could not be recovered (p.353) and on the next page reveals the size of the larger one and an additional smaller one. The dimensions are given as 7 x 2 millimeters and 3 x 1 millimeters. They should have another dimension which is not given. Giving the size in 2 dimensions does not give an approximation of the portion of the bullet that remained.

Although Humes had said he had completed the autopsy at "approximately 11 p.m." (p.349), he now says, "or very early the next morning while we were all still engaged in continuing our examination, I was presented with three portions of bone which had been brought to Washington from Dallas ..."

If he had completed the autopsy at 11 p.m., why was he still "con-

7 - autopsy

tinuing our examination" the next morning? And what about the large fragment of the President's missing scalp and skull that wasn't found until the next day? (p.354)

As so often happens, the Commission, in talking about one thing, unintentionally makes revelations about entirely different aspects of its work. Dulles is questioning Humes (p.357) about the wound. He prefaces his question by saying, "Believing that we know the type of bullets ..." and then two questions later, "We think we know what the bullet is, we may be wrong but we think we know what it was, ...".

Earlier I pointed out that the Commission does not know what bullets were used in the rifle. To refer to it again, the Commission presumed, because of the manufacture of a bullet found in the breach, that all the bullets were of the same manufacture, although they knew that the bullets in the pistol were of different and, in fact, uncertain manufacture. Nowhere have I seen any reference to any effort on the part of the Commission to identify either the manufacturer of the cases that were found at the Depository or of the bullets, or of any effort to determine the manufacture of the bullets by chemical analysis of the parts that were recovered.

Here, without intended to do so, Dulles, forgetting his years in intelligence, or perhaps still under the shadow of the U-2, reveals the Commission is aware of the uncertainty of the source of the bullets. Of course, the importance of the source of the bullets has been pointed out elsewhere. Briefly, it is this: The older bullets are just no blamed good. Most of them don't fire, and those that do fire have lost their velocity. They just are not dependable.

And, perhaps under the same spell as Dulles, Specter makes the same kind of a faux pas. While they are actually discussing the pro-

8 - autopsy - bullets

portion of the total bullet that remained in the President's head, in an effort to give the doctor a way of reaching a percentage, Mr. Specter says, "the bullets used here were 6.5 mm. Mannlicher-Carcano rifle bullet weighing 158.6 grams," but in the report, on p.95, the Commission says the bullet of the presumed manufacture of those that hit the President had a weight of 160 to 161 grains. The confusion is the Commission's, not mine. I have quoted them exactly.

And on p.95 of the report it gives the weight of the "found" bullet as 158.6 grains. Yet in the report it claims that the fragment remaining in Governor Connally's wrist might have weighed this slight difference. It is possible this is just plain sloppiness. In spite of its high-powered staff, the Commission is consistently and remarkably slipshod. On the other hand, there is always the chance that here in examining Humes, Specter is telling the truth in representing the weight of the bullet. We just don't know. Of course, it may not be too important that we do know, because after all the entire reconstruction is based upon the speculated manufacture of the bullet.

At this point (P.359) Humes had been testifying about the weight of the fragment. There were about 30 too small for recovery. He then says of the fragments he recovered, they "were turned over to the Secret Service. I presume that they have made physical measurements including the weight of them, ...". A reasonable presumption, but there is no indication, here or anywhere else I have seen, of this weight. Why is it a secret? Why could not the Commission have had this for the evaluation of their experts? Could anything have been more normal? And could the failure to do so have been anything but abnormal?

9 - autopsy -

Asked (p.360) about the point of entry of the bullets by Senator Cooper, "Did you establish them so exactly that they could be related to the degree of angle of the trajectory of the bullet?" Humes replies, "Yes, sir; to our satisfaction we did ascertain that fact." Note the qualification here. Cooper asked for exactness, and exactness is the minimum the Commission could accept; yet, Humes said that it was "to our satisfaction". These are not the same thing.

Previous sections of the summary and analysis have referred to the telephone calls Humes made on the 23rd November to Dr. Malcolm Perry in Dallas. Humes gave as his reason a desire to inquire about the anterior Neck injury where the tracheotomy had been performed (p.361) and "To ascertain that point, I called on the telephone Dr. ^Malcolm Perry and discussed with him the situation of the President's neck when he first examined the President, and asked him had he in fact done a tracheotomy which was somewhat redundant because I was somewhat certain he had." He then reports that Perry informed him the tracheotomy was performed at the point of the bullet wound.

What Dr. Humes doesn't make clear and what the Commission is very careful not to ask is why the delay until well after the completion of the autopsy? Even had it been 8 o'clock in Dallas, and it was earlier, the time the President's body was subjected to the autopsy examination, is there any reason why, to begin with, Humes couldn't have called the hospital? All of this testimony, together with the previous testimony by the doctors in Dallas, must be examined in connection with the statement by one of the other doctors, I believe Clark, that Humes did, in spite of his and Perry's denials, discuss the autopsy findings with Perry so that the doctors at Dallas could change their story. Of course, this is reasonably clear from all the other surround-

10 - autopsy

ing circumstances. The Commission is properly sensitive on this point to which it returns on p.371 where again Humes says he never told Dr. Perry about his conclusions. Humes, of course, is far from consistent because, as we have already seen, he was quite satisfied to use the Washington Post of November 23 as part of the basis for his whole reconstruction.

A little bit below Humes/quotes Dr. Perry as having said of this wound that "it was a 'few millimeters in diameter'." This is not the whole truth as we have already seen in the report and the testimony and statements of the other doctors; and, in fact, as Humes' own notes of the telephone conversation reveal. The rest of the truth is that one of the doctors gave its size as 3 x 5 millimeters. This is both a specific size and smaller than the wound on the back, 7 x 4 millimeters, the wound the Commission wants to believe was an entrance wound.

Perhaps by the time he called Dr. Perry, Dr. Humes had misgivings about using a newspaper account as part of his raw material. This, of course, would be commendable, but the obvious other implications, ~~and~~ especially when confirmed by another doctor, cannot be avoided.

In any event, by this time it comes as no surprise that the Commission didn't ask the obvious question, "Why didn't you call Dr. Perry immediately?"

- In his handwritten version of the autopsy report, discussion of which I will delay to consider it as a unit, Humes originally had a somewhat different version than appeared in the official document. Part of this confusion crops up in his testimony. In discussing the "neck" wound (p.363), perhaps with only grammatical error in the light of what I will detail below, perhaps inaccuracy, Humes referred to this single wound in the plural: "We examined those wounds very carefully,

11 - autopsy

and found that they, however, did not enter the chest cavity. They only went through the skin." This is my emphasis.

In a previous psummary, I have referred on a number of occasions to the Commission's counsel and its use of the designation "without violation" referring to the pleural cavity. Humes' testimony was, there was "no defect in the pleural lining of the President's chest. It was completely intact." He then points out (p.363) that over the right apex "there was a bruise ... of the parietal pleura as well as a bruise of ~~the~~ upper portion, the most apical portion of the right lung." Elsewhere, he said that because this happened before the President died, it means an injury. His explanation was the "opinion that the missile while ~~was~~ not penetrating physically ~~the~~ the pleural cavity, as it passed that point bruised either the missile itself, or the force of its passage through the tissues, bruised both the parietal and the visceral pleura." I note this here because all of the questioning of the doctors in Dallas was to get them to hypothecate based upon "no violation of the pleural cavity". If "violation" in the medical sense means the actual passage of a bullet, then the Commission's counsel was correct. It would seem to me that the injury itself constitutes violation.

The pictures of the interior of the President's chest were Kodachromes.

On the next page (364) Humes persisted in the confusion about the number of wounds. On the first line he referred to "a" point of entry rather than "the" point of entry. He repeats the same thing on line 14.

And on the same page he joins Specter in a misrepresentation of the Dallas doctors' reports. Sepcter asks, "Does the description 'ragged

12 - autopsy

wound' which is found in the Parkland report shed any light..." In response, Humes said, "I believe, sir, that that statement goes on, ragged wound in the trachea. I don't believe that refers to the skin. And you might say that it is a ragged wound is more likely to be a wound of exit." This is not a fair representation of the Dallas testimony or the original statements of the Dallas doctors. And some of the doctors refer to a "puncture" wound. Some of the nurses were likewise equally specific. They were equally specific in describing the character of the edges of the wound, too.

Up to this point Humes joined the Commission in referring to the posterior non-head wound as a "neck" wound. The schematic drawing he had introduced actually shows it barely on the edges of the neck, almost underneath the right ear, and really on the shoulder, so close to its edge that it almost missed entirely. Humes knew only too well this was a false representation. He is asked (p.365) to examine the President's clothing. First, he found "situated to the right of the midline high in the back portion of the coat is a defect, one margin of which is semicircular." The Commission hastens to establish that this was a sample taken for purposes of analysis. It does not suggest why the sample should have been taken from the area of the wound or even why a sample of the material was necessary. It would seem a sample from any other part of the garment would serve as well for any analysis and would be a lot wiser. Then Humes described "an additional defect. It is our opinion that the lower of these defects corresponds essentially with the point of entrance of the missile at point C of Exhibit 385." Exhibit 385 is the schematic representation (16 H 977). He agrees to the accuracy of Specter's location of this defect as "approximately 6 inches below the top of the collar, and 2 inches to the right of the middle seam of the coat". This is anything but what is represented

13 - autopsy

in Exhibit 385 or 386. Both Humes and the Commission were well aware of the significance of this discrepancy, and they try to clarify it (p.366) by saying that the President with his arm extended approximately at shoulder level, would have distorted his clothing to this extent. The truth will soon become clear.

~~It~~^{He} doesn't provide much information when asked (p.364) about the angle he "observed on the path of the bullet." All he would say here was that "the point of entrance, our point of entrance ..." was lower than the point of exit compared with the vertical. The truth of the Chinese maxim "one picture is worth a thousand words" is abundantly clear here. That is why the Commission has to use a thousand words. And that's why (p.366 and elsewhere) the Commission and Humes have to struggle with their "depiction" with Humes plaintively saying "the photographs would be more accurate as to the precise location ..." By this time Humes has reached the point where he doesn't even accept the Commission's interpretation of its evidence. Shown a clip from the Zapruder film, Humes protects himself by saying it was "allegedly taken just prior to the wounding of the late President ...".

Mr. Dulles, at frequent occasions in these volumes, has appeared to be confused. This is also true on p.358 following the use of "depictions" and "descriptions" when the "best evidence" was readily available. Of the so-called neck bullet he asked "So this bullet is still missing?" Specter assured him "that is the subject of some theories I am about to get into." He did. And they remain theories. He also conceded "that is an elusive subject ...". Meanwhile, Senator Cooper seemed concerned about the point I made above, the "violation" of the pleural cavity. He asked (p.369) "What would be the relation of the bruise at the apex of the pleural sac to such a line?" (between

14 - autopsy

the points of entry and exit) In the light of his already quoted testimony, I cannot understand the meaning of Humes' response: "It would be exactly in line with such a line, sir, exactly." He seems to be saying that the bullet bruised the pleura. It was at this point that he retreated into the explanation, "photographs are superior to my humble verbal description/.." Something also bothered Mr. McCloy (p.369). He asked, "If, contrary to the evidence that we have here, that anterior wound was the wound of entry, the ~~shot~~ shot must have come from below the President to have followed that path." He wasn't really asking, and Humes agreed with him. Of course, all of this depended on where the President was pointing and the direction from which the bullet came. Recall this was an open convertible. Recall that the President was turned to his right according to the pictures.

Then (p.370) Specter asks Humes to "compare the angles" on the two shots. This is the reply he got: "You will note, and again I must apologize for the schematic nature of these diagrams drawn to a certain extent from memory and to a certain extent from the written record, it would appear that the angle of declination is somewhat sharper in the head wound..."

Now this was the expert. He had performed the autopsy. He had supervised everything he hadn't done himself. He had drafted the official autopsy report, and a more important one he will never in his lifetime draft. He is the man with the last scientific word on the death of the late revered President. He has in front of him all of his own materials, plus the schematic drawings he has had made for the Commission, and of these all he can say is that they are indefinite. They are really false.

But Specter presses and Humes agrees they are "roughly comparable"/ Pressed for the angle, "approximately 45 degrees from the horizontal."

15 - autopsy

He had prefaced this by explaining, "Mathematics is not my forte." The Commission's own reconstruction of approximately 20 percent would certainly confirm the good doctor in this. Specter is not above slipping up again either. He describes (p.371) the posterior non-head wound as "the wound in the President's back?"

- He also is aware of the potential of the telephone call between the doctors for he asks on the same page "... did you tell Doctor Perry anything of your observations or conclusions?" Naturally, Humes says, "No, sir; I did not."

In further discussion of the pictures and X-rays (p.372) Humes says they "were made for the record and for other purposes." That evidence was destroyed finally comes out at the bottom of p.372 when Specter enters into the record some of Humes' handwritten papers. Specter asks, "Are there any notes which you made at any time which are not included in this group of notes?" and Humes says, "there are". Specter wants to know "what do those consist of?"

"In privacy of my own home," Humes explains, "early in the morning of Sunday, November 24th, I made a draft of this report which I later revised, and of which this represents the revision. That draft I personally burned in the fireplace of my recreation room." One may well ask what he was doing with the papers in his home, papers on such a matter? And why should he have destroyed one rough draft and preserved another? The nature of the corrections in the existing rough draft may shed some light on this when we get to it shortly. I cannot conceive of any single ^{paper} ~~this~~ having to do with the autopsy on the President which should not have been preserved. Note that in his response Humes does not preclude the possibility that he burned other papers besides that draft. The still-existing rough draft is

end of tape

part of Exhibit 397 in Vol. XVII. It seems to me to be clear that at this point Dr. Humes' response about the destruction of the records is neither truthful nor complete. It seems to me that the Commission should, unless it already knew and was trying to hide the fact, have wanted to know "Why?" As consistent as they have been in such cases, the Commission not only does not ask why, but it accepts this as the normal course of events; not only the staff, but each and every one of the members present, and among those present was the observer, Charles Murray, presumably looking out for Oswald's interests. He hasn't said a word. It cannot be said that Specter wasn't aware of what had happened, as is clear from this exchange (p.373): "And was that writing made at the same time as the autopsy report was undertaken; that is, did you review all of the markings on those papers and note them to be present when you completed the autopsy report?" He gets the required assurance from Humes, who replied, "Yes, sir. From the time of the completion of this examination until the submission of the written report following its preparation, all of the papers pertinent to this case were in my personal custody."

The reply, however, seems non-responsive. Humes has testified he destroyed some papers which he described as a "draft". Specter has not asked what was or was not in ~~his~~^{his} personal custody. He asked if "all of the markings on those papers" were "present when you completed the autopsy report," and he is asking this in the context of what was burned. The nature of the revision of the second draft casts serious doubts upon its faithful preservation of the contents of the first draft. And since it is clear that Humes was, even in his own words, revising, it is likewise clear that all of the contents of the first draft were not preserved in the second draft. But certainly it

17 - autopsy

is not responsive to say, as Humes did, that he had all the papers "in my personal custody".

There are 2 additional items in the exhibit containing the draft besides the note of Humes' conversation with the Dallas doctors. These are a chart on p.45, the importance of which I cannot exaggerate, and another chart on p.397, which frankly I cannot understand. Of these, Humes says, "I notice now that the handwriting in some instances is not my own, and it is either that of Comdr. Boswell or Col. Finck." At the bottom of this page, (373) still talking about the draft, Humes asserted ~~xxxxxxx~~ that "Before submitting it to the typist, I went over this with great care with my two associates. One or the other of them raised the point that perhaps this sentence (reference to one which was changed on the 14th page or p.43 of Vol. VII) would state more than was absolutely fact based upon our observation, pointing out that we did not know precisely at that time in what position the body of the President was when the missile struck and that, therefore, we should be somewhat less specific and somewhat more circumspect than the way we stated it. When I considered the suggestion, I agreed that it would be better to change as noted, and accordingly, I did so."

Isn't it strange that they didn't have the same opinion about using a newspaper report in the autopsy report? This change was as follows: In his revised draft, Humes had said, "The projectiles were fired from a point behind and somewhat above the level of the deceased." As changed it reads, "The projectiles were fired from a point behind and somewhat above a horizontal line to the vertical position of the body at the moment of impact." It is more precise, but it also says a lot less of what the Commission presumably wants it to. It is not nearly as important as some of the many changes that Specter doesn't go into.

18 - autopsy

Mr. McCloy (p.374) puts a somewhat different and, I think, more accurate interpretation on the nature of the notes in this question, "The notes that you made contemporaneously with your examination, you said you put those down and then you put some in later. How much later were the notes, within the best of your recollection of the final notes made, not the final report, but the final notes that you made in your own handwriting?" In reply, Humes says, "...The final changes in the notes prior to the typing of the report were made ... whatever time Mr. Oswald was shot, that is about when I finished." Clearly, Humes is ~~talk~~ talking about his revised draft, not about the subject matter of the question, "the notes that you made contemporaneously with your examination". Those notes are still a mystery not entirely cleared up by 2 documents constituting the last two pages of Exhibit 397, pp.47-8, Vol. XVII. The first one, on the Naval Medical School stationery, dated 24 November 1963, is headed "Certificate" and in it Humes certifies "that all working papers associated with Naval Medical School autopsy reports A63-272 (the report on the President) remained in my personal possession at all times. Autopsy notes and the holograph draft of the final report were handed to Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Medical School, at 1700, 24 November 1963. No papers relating to this case remain in my possession." It is signed by Humes and receipted by Capt. J. H. Stover, Jr., the Commanding Officer of that school.

The second, on the same stationery, the same date and the same heading, certifies "that I have destroyed by burning certain preliminary notes relating to Naval Medical School autopsy report A63-272 and have officially transmitted all other papers relating to this report to higher authority." It is signed by Humes and not witnessed.

19 - autopsy

It does not explain how any notes of any nature could possibly be destroyed. It certainly gives no reason. And it certainly doesn't describe what was destroyed. In jumping from the frying pan, Specter lands in the fire. He abruptly changes the subject to Governor Connally to get the "theory" he had earlier referred to. He asks, "have you had an opportunity to review the medical reports on Governor Connally at Parkland Hospital and Commission Exhibit 392?" Humes has, and he then discusses the wrist wound, in response to Specter's question.

Then Specter shows him the "found" bullet, Exhibit 399. He shows him not the picture, but the bullet. He described it as "the missile which has been taken from the stretcher which the evidence now indicates was the stretcher occupied by Governor Connally", hardly a factual statement.

At this point Specter begins to establish beyond doubt that the position the Commission will ultimately take is invalid and false. He asks if the bullet could possibly have been the President's head bullet and is assured it could not. Then, "And could that missile have made the wound on Governor Connally's ~~wright wrist~~?" Humes asserts, "I think that that is most unlikely." (p.374) With permission he expands (p.375). He quotes from the Parkland Hospital report, especially the part about the fragments, and concludes, "The reason I believe it most unlikely that this missile could have inflicted either of these wounds is that this missile is basically intact; its jacket appears to me to be intact, and I do not understand how it could possibly have left fragments in either of these locations." After quoting the description of the chest injury to the Governor, "shattered approximately ten centimeters of a lateral and anterior portion of the right fifth rib ...", he says towards the bottom of the page

20 - autopsy

that he thinks it possible "that this missile could have struck the rib a glancing blow" and "the missile would not have to strike it directly to cause the fracture that was described". He says the X-rays would be necessary in making a determination. Asked (p.376) if this bullet "could have been the one to lodge in Governor Connally's thigh?" he said, "I think that extremely unlikely. ... I can't conceive of where they (fragments) came from this missile."

The Commission in its report concluded the Governor could have sustained all three injuries without ~~xxxxx~~ ^{immediately} being/aware of being injured.

On the last page (p.376) of his testimony, Dr. Humes is asked this question and says he believes it is possible; he also said, however, "I am sure he would be aware that something happened to him ...". This also destroys the Commission's hypothesis about Governor Connally's reaction or lack of it.

Humes also makes it clear ~~in~~ his testimony that the Governor could have been shot without knowing he had been shot is based not upon his own knowledge, but upon "I have heard reports" and "have been told by my professional associates".

This also validates Governor Connally's testimony (4 H 129 ff.).

Comdr. Humes is followed by Comdr. Boswell whose testimony appears on 2 H 376-7. He is used to confirm Humes, and that is what he does.

Boswell in turn is followed by Col. Finck (2 H 377-84) who confirms Humes even more strongly and specifically on Humes testimony about the bullet, Exhibit 399, and on p.381, when asked "do~~you~~ ^{you} have anything that you would like to add to what he said?" and "or would you like to modify his testimony in any way?", he answered "No" to both questions. Asked further about this bullet, Exhibit 399, on

21 - autopsy

p.382, "And could it have been the bullet which inflicted the wound on Governor Connally's right wrist?" the Colonel makes positive reply, "No; for the reason that there are too many fragments described in that wrist."

On the next page, 383, Col. Finck confirms he was at Bethesda but says the autopsy was in progress when he arrived. The fragment of the bullet had already been removed from the President's head at the time of his arrival.

Will criminal actions flow from the Warren Commission? I don't know - but I think they should. And if they do, one of the pieces of greatest import as evidence will be Exhibit 397 (17 H 29-50).

(Perjury? Subornation of perjury? Destruction of evidence? Conspiracy?)

Nor is it possible to overestimate the importance of this document in any appraisal and evaluation of both the work of the Warren Commission and what ~~was~~ happened to the President.

The future may yet show that enough of the records were not destroyed.

The first page of these handwritten notes, almost completely legible, has been identified by Dr. Humes as his memorandum of the conversation with Dr. Perry. If it reflects what he learned from Dr. Perry, he learned remarkably little. He could have learned as much from the newspapers, quite possibly more. He has drawn three lines across the page from side to side, dividing it roughly into quarters. The upper quarter begins with a notation that appears to have been added later. The first word is indistinct; the rest is "conversation Dr. Malcolm Perry 11/23/63." It then says, "bloody air in upper (indistinct word)". The next item is "only a few mm. in size 3-5 mm."

22 - autopsy

The next quarter has three short lines; the first one appears to be "Laryng ^{to} rt. lat." the second line is "wall of the trachea - ", and the third, "no missile in the wound". The next ~~quarter~~ quarter reads, "hosp. Melrose ~~1-5050~~ 1-5050 4115 Park Lane Dallas 20, Tex. F.L. # 2-5548 Home." The last quarter reads, "Off in Med. School Dept. of Surgery Dr. Tom (added afterwards with an arrow pointing to it) Shires, Dr. Malcolm Perry, J. J. Humes."

The body of the draft - this is the second draft - of the autopsy report begins on p.30. On this page is the first of a long series of alterations, not all of which can be considered editorial. In reference to the speed of the vehicle in which the President was, the words "approximately (20) miles per hour" were lined out and replaced by "a slow - rate of speed". Then, describing the attitude of the President's body, and saying he fell, the words "face downward to the floor of the vehicle" were replaced by the word "forward".

The second handwritten page, on p.31, in describing what Dr. Perry noted, in describing the posterior "neck" wound, has substituted for the words "much smaller" the word "puncture". It is important that, after speaking to Dr. Perry, Humes altered his draft to quote Dr. Perry as having said something diametrically opposed to what the doctors at Park ^{land} ~~land~~ Hospital had already gone on record with.

It is also important that Dr. Humes made major substantive changes in his own scientific findings. On the fourth page of his draft, the last line, (33), in describing the back wound in the handwritten draft he said it was a "7^{mm} oval puncture wound". In his revision he scratched out the word "puncture".

The last 10 lines of his handwritten page 7 (36) contain six changes in the description of the head wound. Two of these consist

23 - autopsy

in eliminating the word "puncture", in the first case substituting for it the word "lacerated". In the first case, along with the elimination of the word "puncture", he took out "tangential to;the surface of othe scalp".

The word "puncture" continued to bother Dr. Humes and on his draft p.8 (37), in reference to what he subsequently described as the "entrance head wound", he drew 3 lines through the word "puncture".

Of the 4 corrections on his page 9 (38), 2 are worthy of note: He added the word "presumably" to limit his formerly unrestricted description of the massive head wound as one of exit. He did the same with respect to the wound of what he called "entry" of the lower shot. In his final official copy it is described as "the second wound, pre-sumably of entry ...". Also on this page he apparently had second thoughts about the size of the pieces of metal remaining in the President's head. He changed the word "fragments" to one indicating smaller pieces, "particles". Referring to the "neck" wound on his p.10 (39), he had referred to "the wound of exit was that described by Dr. ^Malcolm Perry of Dallas in the low anterior cervical region". He made it read, "the second wound/ presumably of entry ... " without even adding the commas.

There are other changes. These are the more important ones.

But the biggest slip-up of all is on p.45 of this volume. Here we have what appears to be a mimeographed autopsy form. It is identified with the code number of the President's autopsy and dated 11-26-63. It is only partly filled in, and does not even include the President's name. It clearly shows signs of having been subjected to spotting of various kinds, which cannot be determined from the copy. This is one of the documents Dr. Humes was very careful to say was

24 - autopsy

not in his handwriting but was in that of his colleagues.

Why it wasn't destroyed I can't imagine. But if any single part of the preliminary data relating to the autopsy should have been destroyed in order to support the untenable finding the Commission was so anxious to "find", this certainly is it. Below the identified blanks in which pertinent information is to be (and for the most part in this case was not) entered are two sketches of a human body. The one on the left is the front, the one on the right is the back.

The wounds are clearly marked on the back and clearly described in exactly the same language used in the autopsy report.

The so-called "neck" or "lower neck" wound here is clearly shown to be, in fact, a back wound. While there is no scale, by means of a ruler it is clear that, from side to side, this wound is approximately 1/3 of the distance from the President's right to the President's left. It is also about the same distance below the bottom of the neckline that it is from the right-hand side of his body.

Here we find a complete and conclusive explanation for all of the futile efforts to distort and misrepresent the nature of the President's wound. Whether it entered from the front or the back, this proves it was not by any stretch of anybody's imagination a neck wound. It is just about exactly where the Secret Service agent (Hill?) who had been called in to witness the location of the wound located it, about 6 inches down from the neck. It is precisely in the spot you would expect to find it from the location of the bullet passage through the President's jacket and shirt.

This chart clearly shows that the back wound was lower on the President's body than the anterior neck wound.

This chart clearly shows the exhibits prepared to "depict" the

25 - autopsy

President's wounds are fraudulent.

This chart is completely consistent with the testimony of the Secret Service agent who said he saw where the bullet struck.

There should now be no question about why autopsy records of any nature were destroyed or about why none of the many photographs were presented to the Commission in its hearing or entered into the record or made public. This chart abolishes the Commission's finding that began as Mr. Specter's "theory" that the same bullet entered the President's neck and injured the Governor. Of course, this means still another bullet, or a minimum of 5.

Also, is it proper for Humes or anyone else conducting an autopsy examination of the President or anyone else to include extraneous information? Is it not his function to say what he finds? Is it proper for him to consult the newspaper? Other doctors, the police, or the government or anybody else? I don't know the official legal function of an autopsy, but it would seem that there is no proper place for extraneous information not first-hand knowledge to those conducting the autopsy examination in such a record.

Again, in the light of what we have seen happened at the Naval Hospital and in its autopsy, recall the scene at Parkland Hospital, where the Texas officials were distraught over the refusal of the White House personnel to permit the autopsy, apparently required by Texas law of Texas officials. The reason given was Mrs. Kennedy's feelings, and certainly, especially under these circumstances, Mrs. Kennedy's feelings were an important factor. But we do have the existence of a law that appears to have been violated forcibly by the President's entourage, and just as conspicuously we have their failure to arrange for the presence of a Texas official at the autopsy. This

26 - autopsy

question is nowhere raised. If it was ever considered, there is no reflection of it in the report. But in the light of the destruction and misrepresentation of records in the official autopsy report, it is asking too much to ignore the refusal of the President's entourage to permit the Texas officials to conduct their proper autopsy on the President.