

12/22/69

Dear Dick,

We have crossed letters again, and yours are taking 6 days. I've responded to Howard, enclosed. In part I've addressed the abilitics questions he raises. I agree some of the questions are inexperience, but I also believe not all, and I think the time to keep the tree straight is before the twig is bent. This one is worth it. Of course, there is nothing unique, nothing to which we are not all susceptible, as a general thing, and there is always the question of faulty racial action. Hard to avoid that with the complexities and enormity.

However, it is also important to do this both gently and in a manner that will not damage him, destroy his self respect, etc. for he is one of the very best, a superb young mind with the greatest potential.

The good reason the tape I sent you, good man + side it, seems no good now. He's returned it, and a heavy check shows both sides void. I know + played some of it back before sending.

When we meet again, remind me to tell you about the funeral-parlor people. They should be left alone, not alone for the reasons you give, which are more than adequate.

There isn't enough time for us to have taken the time I should have in the suggested response to Fisher. Here what I intended to on paper and that it is correct, in content and approach.

His folks did a very nice, thoughtful thing. They sent us a nice box of imported comics. The way we live, that is perfect, and we do appreciate it.

If and when Howard is here again, and I've invited him, I will also address what I would not in writing. Face to face, there will be no problem and it would not be too delicate. I think the important thing is not the personal but the principle that he must learn, and that self-control, if that is the right word.

Letter from Paul Bouy suggests that if each person pays for two copies COUP add when he does it, that will give me five copies (I've limited who has it) to work with. I already have none of either. However, if you cannot swing it, have no reluctance in so saying. And if you want a copy of part one that way, ask him. He has a "finished" copy.

Have a good season,

16 Dec 69 -- ~~RZ~~ P.M.

Harold:

I write this quickly in response to your remarks re Roffman's tem paper. I had not yet read it when I wrote the enclosed letter to R, but by now have read about half and can respond with knowledge regarding some of the things you say. By the way, I read your letter after reading the half of R's paper, and had already formed the basis of my opinions about it.

My thoughts were much the same as yours, and I had already anticipated writing my comments to him. I won't discuss it here, since you'll get a copy of what I send him.

I have had similar material from him and have ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ borne down hard on him on several occasions previously, so he is used to it from me. He has learned to take it without recrimination or insult (and to dish it out), at least from me. I think I understand him well, and can mend his errant ways in a way beneficial to him.

Part of his problem is inexperience, failure to know what is expected of one who publishes research. The rest is somewhat more invidious, but it's a fault that many of us have, and his youthful innocence lifts some of the burden from him.

Although he does not acknowledge it, I am pretty sure that he is hungry for fame, has visions of himself has the straw that breaks the camel's back, and wants publicly to be recognized as such. His fault is that he has not properly evaluated the significance of the ton of bricks that is already weighing the camel down. That can be corrected. He has something of a messianic complex that has to be tempered by notions of fair play. I don't consider anything in him incorrigibly detrimental, but we ought to acknowledge his shortcomings. The messianic notions are the most important aspect. It's easier for me to work with him because because I do not feel I have to protect my work as literary property, but I can imagine the difficulty for others.

Anyway, sit tight until you here from me again about this. I'm glad that you wrote and told me how you felt. My thoughts are different in some regards, but basically we have the same view.

Still,

*Dick*

for whiskey

16 Dec 1969

Howard Roffman  
Philadelphia

Dear Howard:

I'll comment on your term paper when I have time to read it carefully-- probably within the next day or two, since I am anxious to get to ~~it~~ it. This letter refers to matters discussed in your recent correspondence.

Effect of varminting bullets: Thanks for the Consumer Report reference; I'll have a look at it. You will find more about these bullets in books on hunting than in books on forensic pathology, so if you want ~~information~~ published information, go to the hunting books. Bullets of this type rarely figure in crimes, and books on forensic pathology are likely to give them cursory treatment or not treat them at all.

I doubt, too, whether your pathologist can help you as much in this matter as an experienced varmint hunter. Again the reason is that these bullets don't play much of a role in crime, and they are not responsible for many accidents either. Pathologists have experience mostly with ~~handgun~~ handgun and shotgun wounds, less often with rifle wounds, and rarely with wounds caused by varminters. It isn't that the varmint rifles and ammo themselves are rare, but rather that those who use them tend generally to be better shots and more careful with firearms than ordinary hunters. They are far more likely to be devoted to shooting sports than the guys who just pop at rabbits now and then. Moreover, the varminting calibers have special applications that are detrimental to more usual types of hunting.

Ammo for deer rifles: The term "deer rifle" covers a lot of ground, so I can't properly answer your question: What kind of ammo does a deer rifle take? ~~There are many different types of deer rifle ammo.~~ If a gun is chambered for a particular caliber, it can fire any bullet which corresponds to its bore size, regardless what type of bullet it is. The most common types are these:

- 1) unjacketed lead alloy: generally used in low velocity calibers, such as those for revolvers, .22 rimfire firearms, and low caliber rifles.
- 2) "mushrooming" bullets, jacketed except at the tip ~~where~~ where lead core is exposed: this type is normal for deer hunting. Velocity normally is upward of 2000 fps. The jacket is designed so that when it passes through flesh it will peel back somewhat like a banana as the lead core flattens and enlarges at the tip. Depending on the velocity, bullets such as these may break up when they strike bone, but the pieces generally are large. Some are made with ~~hollow~~ hollow points for more rapid expansion.
- 3) frangible bullets: construction is similar to that of mushrooming bullets; i.e., hollow point or lead core exposed at the tip. Copper jacket normally is thinner than for mushrooming bullets, for it is intended that these bullets not ~~mushroom~~ mushroom, but burst-- ~~usually~~ usually they will burst on contact merely with flesh. Such bullets may merely mushroom if they strike targets at exceedingly long distance after their initial velocity has been reduced. Muzzle velocity is very high, although on-target velocity (depending on the distance) may be low.

- 4) military bullets: these are like 399: covered by a jacket all around except at the base. The jacket generally is thicker than for ~~hunt~~ mushrooming bullets, and the lead alloy harder. These may move at high or low velocity, depending on the caliber (the fastest is the 5.6mm bullet now used in the M-16 rifle in Vietnam. The 5.6mm is the military equivalent of the .223 Winchester, a very popular varminting caliber. The only difference between the two is the bullet design-- the .223 carries a frangible bullet. The cartridges are interchangeable in military and hunting rifles; they are absolutely the same except for bullet design). Military bullets are designed not to expand or break up on flesh or bone. These bullets are required for use by military forces in accordance with international agreements concerning warfare.

This brief outline doesn't explain even a small piece of what there is to be known about bullet design, so use it cautiously. There are many, many variables that affect bullet performance.

Write to Winchester\*Western and find out whether you can still get their Ammunition Handbook. It used to be published by Pocket Books, so you might get it from them. It is an excellent introduction to the subject of ammunitions of all types. If you can't get it, I'll loan you my copy-- I may send it anyway, but in the mean time try to get it for yourself.

Houts' "Where Death Delights": Watch out for Helpern as you watch out for Wecht. Nobody has better understanding of forensic pathology, but he does not have full understanding of this particular case. That a detriment, for Houts often asks him the wrong questions or does not give him all info bearing on an issue.

I believe Argosy did an article by (or about) Helpern and his views of the JFK case. I have it somewhere, and will send if you request it. Maybe it was True-- I can't remember for sure.

Houts did an excellent book on forensic pathology for lawyers. I forget the name of it. Hunt it out if you can, and read it, for it has many things that will interest you. If I have time soon, I'll get a specific reference for you. If you don't find it in a general library, try a law library. Probably listed under "original investigation".

Autopsy radiologist: Thanks for Ebersole's name. Funeral parlor people would be a good bet for info, but I strongly doubt whether they would say anything even if compelled in court-- professional ethics sort of thing.

Traveling fragments: I would not encourage you to go far with your notion that fragment might have gone far from the neck area, least of all that it was carried by veins. Remember that JFK's heart effectively stopped beating after he was shot, and I doubt whether his veins were even moving much blood.

Arm in Dal-Tex window: I would not be too concerned about finding a body to go with the arm. The arm appears to be that of a negro, so that in shadow the person might not reflect enough light to be discernible in Altgens 3.

Man on fire escape--Dal-Tex: Probably a Dal-Tex employee, no?  
Climbed out a window onto fire escape.

Harold reminded me that the importance of these people in Dal-Tex is that they were close witnesses.

I'll write more later.

Thanks for credit in your term paper. I gush at its extravagance, but I confess it makes me proud.

Still,

*Bob*

cc. Weisberg