

Dear Mr. Mahon,

5/14/96

Your check is enough to pay for all our books on the JFK assassination.

One who spends as much time asking all the questions you asked is, obviously, interested and concerned. I hope you can understand that at 83, in impaired health and only recently hospitalized for two weeks it is not possible for me to take the time your questions would require.

You will find quite a few of the answer in my books.

It is not possible to approach the assassination in terms of the official story of it. For example, the official evidence itself, lied about, in fact proves that Oswald could not have been in that window at that time to fire any shots.

Any time spent on the so-called theories is almost certain to be wasted. Most of those who advance them lack full enough knowledge of the established ~~fact~~ fact and most are indifferent to it, preferring to consider themselves Parry Masons.

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Levar is overloaded and has serious medical problems. I am certain he cannot undertake any more pro bono work. His address is 918 F St., #509, Washington, DC 20004.

The National Archives can provide a picture of CE 569.

These head fragments were "dust-like."

I believe the only form in which any X-rays have been released is as the HSCA published them.

The cyfistone was patched, as you should have read in Case Open. That means there could be no specimen retrieval.

What Donahue did is outrageous, indecent, and he was told in advance his theory is not possible.

I enclose a page on my NEVER AGAIN! Your book store can get it. We did not publish it.

Sorry I can't take time for me,

Harold Wisberg

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21702

Dear sir:

Here is \$100 for a copy of Post Mortem. If there is enough money left over, I would like copies of your other books except for Case Closed (I have a copy of that one). I would also like to get copies of pictures of Kennedy close to the time of the head shot. I would especially like to get a high quality color print of Zapruder frame 312. Please send them to:

Thomas O. Mahon Jr.
5464 N. Port Washington Rd. #218
Glendale WI 53217

I'm mainly interested in the physical evidence (e.g. ballistics, pathology). I've read Posner's "Case Closed", your "Case Open", Bonar Menninger's "Mortal Error", and bits and pieces of other sources. I'm particularly interested in testing Howard Donahue's theory that was presented in "Mortal Error". Even if Mr. Donahue is wrong about his main theory (i.e. that the head shot was fired by accident), he has raised several interesting questions of fact. Some of these questions are directly relevant to the Warren Commission's main findings.

1. The main issue in Donahue's theory is the angle Kennedy's head is turned to the left at the time of the head shot. Since the House Committee on Assassinations picked specific inshoot and outshoot points, they were locked in to a 25 degree angle relative to the direction of the car. A difference of more than a degree or two would make it impossible for Oswald to be the shooter. Donahue came up with a 15 degree angle, the House Committee came up with 25 degrees, and Failure Analysis apparently also came up with 25 degrees because their cone pointed at the TSBD. I called Failure Analysis and talked with Angela Meyer. I asked her for information about how the angles were calculated. She said that they used doubles for Kennedy and Connally and photographed them. But she also said that Failure Analysis now has a policy against releasing any of the underlying data. She seemed to imply that that was due to a bad experience with Gerald Posner. Do you know of anyone else who tried to calculate that angle?
2. In the TV special on the 30th anniversary of the assassination, there was a computer recreation (I think by Failure Analysis) of what Oswald saw during the shooting. It showed the view through the scope, the shot, then the rifle being moved away while the bolt was operated, then the process was repeated for the last two shots. On the other hand, Posner quotes Howard Brennan's description of the shooting as saying that Oswald kept the rifle rested on the cornice. Would a seated shooter usually work the bolt of a rifle while sitting in place, or would he move the rifle to get a better angle for leverage? You seem to say on page 94 of Case Open that he would have to move the rifle because of the telescopic sight: "having to take the rifle down to operate the bolt without damage to one's self". Do you know of anyone who has investigated this point?
3. Howard Donahue reported that the jacket of the bullet fragment recovered from the front seat (I think he is referring to CE 569) had been peeled back about 180 degrees. This made it unlikely that it was part of the bullet from the head shot, because the

skull would not exert enough pressure to do that. Is a picture of that fragment available?

4. Donahue also reported that the big fragments found in the front seat didn't have blood or brain tissue on them. I called the FBI and asked when bullets would be likely to have blood or tissue on them. The expert said it depended on several things: whether it had passed through clothing, the shape of the bullet (round nose vs. flat or hollow point), and whether the bullet was deformed or fragmented. Do you know of anyone else who has analyzed this question?
5. Do you know of pathologists who specialize in firearms wounds who have examined this case? Donahue quotes Cyril H. Wecht about the fragmentation pattern of the bullet (page 231). Did Dr. Wecht specialize in firearms wounds?
6. One interesting question is whether there was enough energy in the bullet to break its jacket and to do all the damage to Kennedy's head. If there wasn't, then the bullet fragments from the front seat couldn't have come from the head shot. Do you know of anyone who has tried to calculate how much energy was used to fold back the bullet's jacket?
7. In addition to the energy required to bend or break the jacket, there is the question of the energy necessary to damage the skull. I looked at the book "Wound Ballistics" by the Surgeon General (1962). It calculated the energy loss of various sizes of bullets going through skin, soft tissue and bone. However, it used steel spheres instead of actual bullets. This gave results that were too large for two reasons: a) lead is denser than steel, so it would lose proportionately less energy, b) a bullet is more streamlined than a sphere, so it would also lose less energy. Do you know of other studies of this subject?
8. The X-rays of Kennedy's skull showed many bullet fragments. You quote Posner (page 135 of Case Open) that "less than 1mm of metallic dust particles was evident on the X-rays of the President's head". You then said that his source said there were forty such particles. His book lists Dr. James Humes WC Vol II pages 353/354 as the source for that. Howard Donahue quoted Dr. Russell Fisher (who was part of Attorney General Clark's Feb. 1968 team) as saying of the 40 fragments: "A lot of them were no bigger than the point of a pen, and the largest was about the size of the nail on your little finger." The problem is that 1mm is a measure of length, not volume or mass. Is 1mm the length of each particle or the length you would get if you laid them all end to end? Do you know of any attempt to calculate the total mass of the bullet fragments in Kennedy's head?
9. The 1968 Panel Review (requested by Attorney General Ramsey Clark) listed three X-rays of Kennedy's skull. Donahue's book included a photograph of one of the lateral X-rays (autopsy X-ray No. 2) that was included in the House Select Committee report. Have the other two X-rays been released? If so, how can I get copies of them? The two lateral X-rays could be used to get a stereoscopic view of the bullet fragments and so place them in three dimensions. The anterior-posterior X-ray could be used to determine the size of the hole in the rear of the skull: if it is smaller than 7 or 8 millimeters, that would disprove the theory that Oswald fired the head shot.

10. In your discussion of James Tague, you said he was hit by a "spray of concrete" (page 140). You quote Shaneyfelt as saying that the curb wasn't nicked, so presumably he implied Tague was hit by a ricochet from a bullet fragment. Donahue also said Tague was hit by a bullet fragment, but he said the curb had been nicked. Posner said a bullet fragment had hit the curb and a concrete chip had wounded Tague. Has any forensic work been done to determine whether he had been hit by a bullet fragment or a concrete chip?
11. I'm not sure I'm interpreting this correctly, but if the concrete curb wasn't dug up until August 5, 1964 (page 153), then it had been exposed to the elements for over eight months. It seems likely that any trace of the original bullet would have been washed away. This means that the mixture of lead and antimony John F. Gallagher found would have come from another bullet. So the entire test was useless. Is that correct?
12. You quote Tague's testimony (page 147) that the Hertz clock said 12:29. This is different from most accounts: they usually say 12:30. This might be used to establish the exact time of the shooting (to within a few seconds). What he said implies that the shooting started just before or just after the clock changed from 12:29 to 12:30. Was that clock calibrated against an official clock? Were there other references to that clock in the Warren Commission testimony?
13. On page 144 you list the references to James Tague in your book Post Mortem. It would be convenient if you included an index in your book. A table of contents would help also.
14. On page 91 you say: "Guinn himself certified, covering his own ass, ...". On page 158 you quote the FBI's first and second "laws": "cover the bureau's ass" and "cover your own ass". What made me notice those references was an interesting string of occurrences relating to the assassination.
 - a. Donahue quotes Josiah Thompson that James Humes initially said that the bullet that entered Kennedy's back didn't pass all the way through. But he found out the following day that there was a wound in Kennedy's throat. He then rewrote his autopsy report and burned the original. (Page 32)
 - b. Donahue also quotes Josiah Thompson that CE 399 (the bullet from Connally's stretcher) may have been picked up by a hospital employee as a souvenir, but then was put on the stretcher. (Page 39)
 - c. Donahue also quotes the Church Committee subreport on the Kennedy assassination that the FBI was primarily concerned with its reputation. (Page 133)
 - d. John Connally, in his autobiography In History's Shadow, said that the reason Kennedy wasn't declared DOA was that none of the physicians was willing to take the responsibility for declaring dead the President of the United States.
 - e. Cartha DeLoach, the number three man in the FBI under Hoover, in his book Hoover's FBI, said that when Hoover learned that the Warren Commission was going to criticize the bureau, he immediately took protective measures: he gave letters of reprimand to several of his agents and transferred James Hosty permanently.
 - f. National Review printed an article about Morris Childs, a member of the Communist Party who was secretly working for the FBI. It included a passage where he heard the KGB report to the Politburo about the Kennedy assassination and Lee Harvey

Oswald: they swore that they had nothing to do with Oswald.

When I mentioned these incidents to my sister and said that the pattern was CYA, she replied: "APU - as per usual". I guess this is SOP, if that's not using too many TLAs (three letter acronyms).

15. I'm interested in cases other than the Kennedy assassination. For one of them I will have to do an FOIA. I heard that James Lesar is very good at that. Could you tell me how to get in touch with him?

Tom Mahon