

Cdr. H.D. Hannas
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
Department of the Navy
Washington, D.C. 20372

3/7/81

Dear Commander Hannas,

Thank you very much for your letter of the fifth and its enclosures.

I desire to carry this further, if possible. I therefore request additional information that does not involve privacy or other/considerations and FOIA exemptions such

Also, I do not want to blind-side you. I am the senior of Warren Commission critics. I have done more work on and published more about the autopsy on President Kennedy than anyone else. My published work is severely critical of the Commission's handling of the autopsy and related evidence and of the deficiencies of the autopsy itself. However, I do not espouse any conspiracy theories and I do seek not to cause harm to the innocent. I also seek to establish and leave for posterity the most accurate possible record of those tragic events. My frequent defense of federal agencies and personnel from the kind of unjustified criticism represented by the Lifton book has resulted in those persons attacking me.

Aside from historical record purposes I intend to be able to rebut Lifton's irrationalities to the degree possible.

Basic to his conjectures is the spiriting of the corpse into the Bethesda installation through what is called the back gate. It is my information that this gate was locked at the time and that the guard was not there to open it. My information comes from a friend who was assigned there then and who always used that back gate on leaving. He found it locked, with no attendant, when he tried to use it that night, at about the time Lifton theorizes it was used. If there is any record pertaining to this, or any record of the ordering that it be locked as part of the security that was begun before the corpse reached Bethesda, I would appreciate it.

Lifton makes an argument relating to more than one ambulance. Is there any record of the dispatching of ambulances? One was requested by radio from Air Force 1. Captain

Canada reportedly also sent an ambulance, with a cardiac specialist, because of LBJ's his cry of heart trouble. Were two ambulances sent?

Lifton postulates a shell game with caskets and hearses. Are there any records pertaining to the sending and receipt of caskets? The casket obtained in Dallas was returned to that funeral director. It was damaged and was not used after it reached Bethesda. The President was buried in a casket obtained from the Gawler funeral home.

In order to be able to pretend that there was time at Bethesda for the hankypanky essential to his untenable theories Lifton omits the time required for the taking of photographs and X-rays prior to the beginning of the autopsy. There is a sworn record that X-rays were taken before the autopsy began as well as after it began. The later X-rays were requested by Army Lt. Col. Pierre Finck. The X-rays are of two different sizes. This is among the factors leading me to believe that the first X-rays may have been taken outside the morgue and the second X-rays made with a portable machine that was moved to where the autopsy was being performed. If there are any pertinent records I would appreciate copies. Perhaps there are photographs or other records reflecting whether or not an X-ray machine was or was not at the point where the autopsy was performed. Lifton's own account of the appearance of that room does not include one.

Several of the persons who were present at the autopsy appear to be still assigned to Bethesda. If any non-secret statements were taken from them after the attention to Lifton's book I would appreciate copies.

Thanks you for any information you can provide.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg