

Mr. David Hall
160 Barrett Ave.,
Evanston, WY 82930

5/4/92

Dear Mr. Hall,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 27th, for the tape of the Nelson interview and for the transcription of it.

At 79 and in impaired health I try to respond to each day's mail as soon as it gets here to avoid accumulations. So, without now having the time to listen to or at this moment even to read the interview, I want to thank you for them before there is any possibility of your kind letter getting lost in one of the many stacks on my desk.

I suggest that you build no hopes on either the disclosure of a large number of sealed files or what they may hold. The crime itself was never investigated so there is no smoking gun that remains hidden.

Stone has lied his head off about these allegedly sealed files to promote himself and his movie, to the end that what would have been disclosed easily, the records generated by the House assassins committee, which required only the passing of a simple resolution by the House itself, is not bogged down perhaps terminally with his demand for the records of the executive agencies some of which ought not be released, and with the administration's refusal to consider disclosure of what is classified. The bill is already snagged and it requires not only the concurrence of both Houses but Bush's signature, which is not likely.

Stone is exploiting and commercializing the assassination as a vehicle for arguing what he wanted to say about Viet Nam. He has gone for all the nutty theories and the film itself is a big lie because he said it was non-fiction, his recording of our history. He has stayed away from fact like it would kill him.

I did not catch Crenshaw on 20/20 but I've read and have a low opinion of his book. Aside from his observations, which may or may not have been his but in any event are not new, all he has in the book is nutty assassination misinformation mixed in with a smidgeon of fact plus the sensational claim that LBJ called him. I do not believe that and a check of the LBJ phone logs discloses no such call.

Fletcher Prouty is a friend but he gets carried away sometimes. There is nothing to his belief that he was sent to the South Pole so he could not prevent the assassination, which he could not have done in any event, and he is just wrong on what he said he saw in the New Zealand paper. It was the next day. I presume these are what you had in mind.

Again thanks and best wishes,


Arnold Weisberg

TRANSCRIPT of TAPED INTERVIEW

DORIS NELSON, R. N.

PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

DALLAS, TEXAS

Personal Interview On December 29, 1982
At 1:00 P.M.

Interviewer: David E. Hall

of Traverse City, Michigan

PERSONAL INTERVIEW BETWEEN MRS. DORIS NELSON, R. N. OF
PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, DALLAS, TEXAS AND DAVID E. HALL
OF TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN ON DECEMBER 29, 1982 AT 1:00 P.M.

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND HIS CARE/TREATMENT
UPON HIS ARRIVAL AT PARKLAND HOSPITAL ON FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 22nd, 1963.

Mrs. Doris Nelson, R. N. was in charge of the Emergency Room at Parkland Memorial Hospital on November 22, 1963. The following taped interview was at Parkland at the date and time noted above. I was extremely fortunate to obtain this interview as I had been told by her secretary that Doris rarely speaks of this subject and has turned away hundreds of requests.

The recording starts at the point where Doris is discussing a conversation she had had at her office just prior to my arrival (the exact date and time were not mentioned by Doris) with Mr. David Lifton. He had stopped by to give her an autographed copy of his newly released book "Best Evidence". She said she had been interviewed by Mr. Lifton for his book and asked if I had read it yet. I indicated that I had just purchased a copy in my hometown of Traverse City, Michigan, and was reading it while on my trip to Dallas. She said she felt his book was as "accurate and historically factual account of the Presidents' assassination as had been written at that time."

As the tape begins, she is in the middle of her story about Mr. Lifton, describing how William Manchester gave her a very negative description of herself in his book "Death of a President". She states in fact that Mr. Manchester never spoke with her.

BEGIN: "and Manchester was so nasty in his book (me "William Manchester") about me, he said I...well I said I never run into William Manchester; where he got the information that he described me in his book I'll never know. He (David Lifton) said "no, you're not like that at all!" He said "I envisioned some ol* meannnnn...(me laughing) individual ^{cause} Manchester had described me as "the white starched dragon in the rubber shod shoes"...in his book and it sounded like Jackie and I had had a fighting match, which we didn't at all. (ME) "Had you met his wife then; you met Mrs. Kennedy?" (Doris) She was ... ya...I met everybody. (ME) You're a fantastic individual... when I had heard that there was somebody actually here that ...present that day it's just like, ya know... (Doris)...I'll give you a brief scenerio of what happened. (me) "OK" (Doris) Turn your tape recorder on since you're such an avid collector. (me) Thank you! (Visitor with me from Traverse City sitting in on the interview) "This tape won't go anywhere but in that room"...referring to my John F. Kennedy Library.

DORIS NELSON'S ACCOUNT BEGINS: "Several of the nurses in the emergency room were at lunch and we were all talking about Kennedy being in town and I said "well, he's probably in the parade route now...it was about 12:15...and someone said "Suppose he's in a car wreck"!...and I said aw, they'd never bring him to Parkland. At that time they didn't make all these pre-

arr

arrangements for visiting dignitaries like they do now, for all the Presidents and stuff so I had no...no there was no arrangements made with us by the Secret Service prior to his arrival. I said "oh they'd probably take him to Bailor (?sp.) Bailor is one of the largest private hospitals in the city. So I walked back into the emergency room from lunch and...into the surgical area and the phone was ringing...and I picked up the phone and I said "surgery emergency room, Mrs. Nelson." And the operator said "Doris, the Presidents' been shot and will be here in five minutes!" I said "Ya Phyllis, what else is new today?" ya know...something like this just doesn't click in your mind, but I know she said "I've gotta go, I've gotta call some doctors." ...and I knew it was real, so I grabbed the head nurse and a...one of the surgery doctors and I told them to get the trauma room set up and make sure everything was ready because the President would be here in five minutes.

Well, it was difficult convincing them too. So I went out and a...saw another doctor coming down the hall, so I grabbed him too, and a ..so they were all there waitin' when he came in.

We have what we call a TRIAGE system where a nurse sits at the front desk and she sees every patient that comes into the emergency room and determines their priority of care and their chief complaint. I didn't have time to tell her that the President had been shot. So, when they came in, there was no stretchers out on the dock, 'cause he was still in the limo when they brought him in...and they needed stretchers a...the Secret of Service agents came running in the door and of course they were just frantic...you know...just...they had guns with them and all this stuff. Just scared that poor nurse to death... (laughing)...She didn't know what was going on. She thought a bunch of wild men had gotten loose 'cause she didn't know the President had been shot and was coming in. So when they wheeled in they wheeled Conally in first. He was um...in the jump seat and so he was the first one taken out. I was fairly new in Texas. I'd been here ...oh...about eight months. I didn't know who he was but I figured he must be important if he had gotten shot with Kennedy. So he looked rather pale and I noticed he had a blood stain on his shirt. So, ya know how ya just take a shirt and rip it?...pop all the buttons off? 'Cause it's my responsibility to see that the right doctors got in the right rooms to treat the right type of injuries and stuff like this, so I saw that he had a huge wound in his ...in his chest and I figured that that was his most significant wound so when the chest surgeon arrived, that was the one I was gonna put in the room with him.

So shortly after he came in, right behind him they brought Kennedy on a stretcher and they had a coat thrown over his head and Jackie had her roses laying on his...on his body. And she was walking along side his cart with Secret Service agents pushing it. We put him in TWC and I tried to um...several doctors came down, they were in the room with him and... they attempted to do a tracheotomy because he had a...apparently a

bullet in his...went through...came out...went in his back and came out his throat...or went in his throat and came out his back. So they were doing a trach on him and all this...oh...it was...everything they was doing was just lifesaving measures but he was essentially dead when he got here. 'Cause he had a large portion of his brain that had been blown off right...right about in this area (jesturing with her right hand a large area in the right rear of his head...as shown in the picture of Doris Nelson, R.N. in Life Magazine issue of November, 1983. She passed away at age 52, of liver cancer shortly after giving an interview to Life)...with brain matter protruding from his head at the time that he came in here.

Anyway, Jackie wanted to go in the room when they were doing the trach and I told her that I thought that the room was just full of doctors; they were all so busy working. I thought it best that she not do it, ya know and she thought it best that she would so some secret service agent informed me that she could do whatever she wanted to do. So I said "you got the gun, I don't" (laughter) ...so I threw her roses in the garbage can and went home and soaked his blood out of my uniform...like a fool...I could of...soaked it all night but um...he was essentially dead...there is no way he could have lived with the type of injuries he had when he came in here. And one of the nurses, they were starting IVs on his arm, took his watch off. For lack of any place else to put it so it wouldn't get misplaced, she stuck it in her pocket..and then after they had left and gone back to the airport, she looked in her pocket and said "CH MY Lord I've got the Presidents* watch!" So I said that's no problem, we'll just turn it in to Security and they can give it back to the Secret of Service.

(me) That must have been a day...(Doris) Well, it wasn't so bad at that time because we were pretty well, you know...confined to outside people because the Secret Service closing off all the entrance ways except for true emergency patients that needed to come in. But it was the news media afterwards, you know, someone had to be here 24 hours a day, because otherwise, they were constantly trying to get into the emergency room to take pictures and get in your way and...mean we...we were a busy emergency room. We had to keep all these people out so we could take care of our patients that were coming. 'Cause at that time we were seeing about 350 patients in a 24 hour period and now we see in excess of 500 to 600 in a 24 hour period. (me) I'm sure that it wasn't long after that day that alot of you people, including yourself got burned out on these...ya know...see on TV...(Doris) Well, for several years we didn't talk to the news or anyone about it...because everyone wrote up what their participation was in the incident and it was sent to the administrator and anything that anyone wanted to know, they got it from the administrators office....because you ... no matter where you go now, you run into someone that ever worked at Parkland, they were here when the President was shot

and they took care of him and I've heard more people say they took care of the President that I'd never seen and never heard of before in my life and I know that they're liars, ya know and ah...everybody takes care of the President. If you've ever been to Parkland, you took care of the President.

(me) To be honest with you, I was kind of surprised that I would find somebody that was still here , ya know. That was almost twenty years ago, ya know...(Doris) I've been here twenty years this last September. (Visitor with me) Where did you come from? (Doris) I originally came from Miami, but I'm from North Carolina.....a lull in the conversation...Doris.. Better turn your tape off.....laughter...

As I exit Pakrland Hospital...wind is picked up on the pocket recorders' microphone...

(me) "Mrs. Doris Nelson, Registered Nurse at Parkland Memorial Hospital. Time now is 1:15 P.M., December 29th, 1982.

* ***** *

P. 3.

Not wanting to say or ask anything that might have caused Mrs. Nelson any discomfort, I did not ask many questions. I was eager to here "her story". At the end of the interview, after she suggested I turn my tape off, conversation ensued for awhile. I asked if she had been interviewed by the Warren Commission. She responded in the affirmative but gave no indication of wanting to discuss this topic. I told her of my admiration of President Kennedy, that I had started a Kennedy Library on him at the age of eight years old, in 1959. I spoke of my desire for the past 19 years to come to Dallas and visit Dealey Plaza and Parkland Memorial Hospital. She asked me questions about my background.

I told her I grew up in rural northern Michigan, graduating from high shcool in 1969, was drafted in 1970; spent two years in the military and was honorably discharged in 1972. Since that time I had worked for the next 10 years as a child care worker/youth specialist for the Michigan Dept. of Mental Health and Dept. of Social Services.

After an enjoyable chat, she mentioned that all Parkland employees who were on duty November 22-24, 1963, received a special "Parkland Highlights" bulletin published by the hospital regarding all the goings on during those three days of history in the making at the hospital. She said she thought she still had her copy of the paper and wondered if I'd like to have her copy for my library?! I, of course, responded that I would be delighted. She continued to search through her desk as we continued to chat. Fearing I had taken up too much of her time already, I suggested that I could leave her my address and she could send it to me if she happened to find it. At that point

she looked up from her desk and asked me if I were in a hurry to leave. I responded no, but that I didn't wish to take up any more of her time. (Doris was a chief administrator in charge of a large part of Parkland hospital...at the time I met with her) She responded by saying that "well, I'm having a good time if you are so I'm in no hurry!" As we continued to talk, she found the paper, of which she had kept for over 19 years; and handed it to me across her desk. I glanced through the pages and as I did, the thought that raced through my mind was..."after all these years...and of all the people in the world, WHY...WHY would she give me this cherished possession?"

I looked back across the desk and said..."I can't take your paper...she at first looked puzzled...then appeared to understand. I said "you were the one in charge the day President Kennedy was brought in to your hospital, mortally wounded from assassins bullets....you were one of the last people to ever see him and obviously this paper has meant a great deal to you to have kept it all these years. I can't take your paper." I then asked her if she had access to a copy machine, which she indicated she did. I asked her if she would be kind enough to make me a copy of her paper and that I would love to have that for my library. She departed briefly and returned with my copy. We then shook hands, I expressed my gratitude for her time and willingness to share her story with me, and said our goodbyes. Needless to say, this will be a moment I will always treasure. Doris died less than a year after our enjoyable and memorable encounter that rather brisk but sunny afternoon. I always meant to write and thank her once again for sharing those special memories...the last moments of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's life.....I learned a very valuable lesson about procrastination.....

Mrs. Doris Nelson, R.N. of Parkland Memorial Hospital in
Dallas, Texas-----what a SPECIAL LADY-----She'll be sorely
MISSED!

Compiled by: Mr. David E. Hall.....formerly of Traverse City, Michigan

(current address)
160 Barrett Avenue
Evanston, Wyoming 82930

Ph. (307) 789-0853

DATE: Feb. 17, 1991