

Editorial-page editor
The New York Times
229 W. 43 St.,
New York, NY 10036

5/24/92

Harold Welsberg
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Dear Editor,

Please excuse my delay in responding to your editorial criticism of me personally and professionally. I was in the hospital when it was published. Also, please excuse my typing, which for a series of medical reasons, including that I must keep my legs elevated when I type, with the typewriter to the side, can't be any better.

Frankly, I am ag^oast that the Times could be as prejudiced, as ignorant and as much an uncritical apologist for officialdom as in its editorial and reporting on this exceptional AMA propaganda ploy ~~it is~~.

I am also disappointed that when over the years I've spent many unpaid days helping a series of Times reporters it now, as the vaunted newspaper of record, defames me as this editorial does. And that without speaking to me and without even consulting its own morgue.

If you had consulted your morgue you'd have learned that the doctors lied in claiming to be breaking their silence for the first time now. Check, for example, under Dr. J. Thornton Boswell for November, 1966. I prepared a Baltimore Sun reporter to interview him. Boswell was so pleased ^{over} with coming him he gave the same story to AP in a separate interview.

You could also have learned that I was a Times source in exposing what the House Select Committee on Assassinations was doing and not doing.

I am not a blind partisan, I have defended the FBI against unjustified criticism, and I give free and unsupervised access to all writers to ~~the~~ ^{my} third of a million pages of once-suppressed official records on the JFK and King assassinations, even though I know in advance that I will disagree with what they will write.

I consider that FOIA makes me surrogate for the people and I try to live by this belief. For which the Times now maligns me and misrepresents my work and my qualifications for it and in effect accuses me of exploiting the great tragedy for money, which is utterly ^{or} false and defamatory.

I recognize that my enclosed response is longer than letters usually are. I hope that in balated fairness the Times will consider it as an oped page submission. If you do, please feel free to edit it as you see fit as long as you do not change the sense of anything I say.

There is so much more of the official evidence that disproves the official "solution" I could have added and to which you are welcome if at last the Times is willing to confront its own past on this subject and report the realities rather than theories!

Like the suppressed and hidden official death certificate executed by the President's

own physician, Admiral Burkley. He was the only doctor who was in the Dallas emergency room and the Bethesda autopsy room and he was not called as a witness by the Commission.

On its part, it hid in the one place one ordinarily would never search, the files of what the Commission sent to the Government Printing Office to be published, what it did not publish of ^{these} his records. That is where I found his death certificate. It locates the rear, non-fatal wound not in the President's neck but at the level of his third thoracic vertebra.

Also hidden there is his "verification" of Dr. Boswell's autopsy body chart which locates this wound about five inches lower than he and Dr. Humes testified it was.

These hidden records also include the receipt for those notes Dr. Humes said he destroyed even though he had testified to the Commission that what he burned was the first draft of his autopsy report that he rewrote as soon as he learned that Oswald was dead and that there would be no trial!

They also include the original of the holograph of his autopsy report in which all but one of the innumerable references to "puncture" wounds was eliminated by his superiors the night Oswald was killed. *(That one was eliminated when the report was typed.)*

I published these and many similar records in facsimile in Post Mortem. They thus have been available to the Times for about 17 years. *And to the doctors and the AMA.*

As is all I have accumulated via FOIA.

In assailing me personally and professionally without the most perfunctory effort to learn the truth, in behaving as would not have been tolerated from the greenest cub in my reporting days, the Times has made and leaves for the record an incorrect and dishonest personal defamation and professional mischaracterization I hope it can find the decency and honesty to correct.

My work has been subjected to the closest examination by the executive agencies. It has survived this and other intense scrutiny. It is accurate. There is no significant error in any of my books and only about a dozen minor errors all of which come from accurate quotation of the official records.

Over the years I have received more than 20,000 letters from concerned Americans, all strangers to me, without a single letter complaining of unfair treatment of any of those I named in my seven books.

Many of these letters express disenchantment with the major media. The Times' uncritical acceptance of this strange AMA behavior and its entirely unjustified attack on me exemplify ^{one} ~~that~~ cause of this prevalent disenchantment and distrust.

I regret also and very much that in return for my unpaid acceptance of the Times' responsibilities for almost 30 years and for the many unpaid efforts I made to help the Times that at 79 and in seriously impaired health it causes me as it does in this editorial.

I do hope you will want to rectify this.

Harold Weisberg
Sincerely, Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg 5/24/92

It is indecent as well as grossly inaccurate for the Times in its mistitled May 21 editorial, "Best evidence," to characterize me as a "conspiracy buff" who makes "a pretty good living" in my alleged "profession of casting doubt on the Warren Report and grasping ^{at} any ^{whip} with which to beat it" in my "several books" that total seven.

My work is entirely factual and in fact for more than two decades I have spent much time, including with Times reporters, debunking conspiracy theories.

The first of my "Whitewash" series of books was the first on the Warren Report. It was first published in 1965 and as its subtitle states is an analysis of that Report, comparing it with the alleged underlying evidence. My subsequent books all have the same approach and method and were expanded to include the records of the executive agencies I obtained by about a dozen FOIA lawsuits some of which were precedential and one was cited in the 1974 debates ^{as the basis for} leading to the amending of that Act to open FBI, CIA and similar agencies to the young fogies and Johnny-come-latelies of the major media.

Rather than making me ~~lose~~ "a pretty good living" it made me considerable debt that grew and grew until a farm - owned was taken to be included in a park area.

In questioning my credentials without making any effort to learn what they are the Times asks, "how come Mr. Weisberg can be so sure..!"

I am a former reporter, investigative reporter, Senate investigator and editor and a decorated ^d/World War II intelligence analyst. In one of my FOIA lawsuits the FBI certified to that court that I know more about the JFK assassination than any of its agents. In another the Department of Justice persuaded that judge to have me act as its consultant in my lawsuit against it on the identical grounds.

In taking what The Washington Post used without context from a long interview that was mostly on other matters and again without asking me anything at all, the Times asks what it could easily have learned for itself from a library or any authentic firearms expert, "How, we'd like to know, does Mr. Weisberg know what kind of bullet was fired?" no doubt the reason it did not ask me; and, "how come Mr. Weisberg can be so sure how

(sic) ^{have} the real bullets would ^{behave}?"

The full-jacketed, ^{World War II} hardened military ammunition alleged ^{ly} used to kill President Kennedy was designed to conform to the Geneva convention stipulating a design to cause "humanitarian" through-and-through rather than dum-dum-like injuries.

It is designed not to fragment like hunting or varminting ammunition, where the intent is to cause death with "soft" ammunition that causes horrible but more instantly deadly injuries.

As the Times quotes the autopsy pathologists as saying, the bullet that exploded in President Kennedy's head left "fragments." In speaking to the Post I cited their own report which refers to a cluster of some 40 "dust ^{dust}-like" particles shown in X-rays they took of the head. *Minute particles.*

This is precisely the kind of "behavior" prohibited by the Geneva convention. ~~and~~

The design of the alleged bullet, based on this international agreement, was to eliminate the kind of damage reported and in not one of the many test firings made for the Commission did any of the bullets leave "dust-like particles."

And, as neither the Times nor the American Medical Association say, nobody has been able to duplicate the shooting attributed to the duffer, Oswald, not even the best shots in the world, "masters" having been provided by the National Rifle Association for the Commission's test firing at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

In addressing to the Post the AMA's claim that because the autopsy doctors said they were right they were indeed right, for which no other support was provided, I called to its attention some of the official evidence ignored in the Warren Report and by its apologists that prove the official theory of the crime, that one person fired all those shots from above and behind, is impossible.

The single-bullet theory invented by now Senator Arlen Specter and contradicted by all the actual evidence requires that one bullet have caused all seven, non-fatal injuries on the two victims, a feat unequalled in science or mythology and not even attempted to be duplicated in the official testing.

This means that this one magical bullet had to have exited from the front of the

President's neck, through his shirt collar, leaving bullet holes in it and in the tie he was wearing. It did not!

Contrary to the AMA's statement that the doctors were speaking for the first time, ^{above} I interviewed three of those cited. One, Charles Carrico, confirmed his Warren Commission ignored testimony, supported by the emergency-room nurses who worked under his direction, that the bullet hole in the President's neck was above his shirt collar and that ~~it was~~ the damage to that shirt collar, slits, not holes, was caused by the scalpel with which the nurses, speed being essential, cut the necktie off.

Dr. Carrico demonstrated this for me by grabbing his own necktie and showing me how the tie was cut off with two ~~hasty~~ hasty motions with the scalpel.

I published the pertinent parts of my interviews in my 1975⁵ book, "Post Mortem," without any complaints from these doctors, with whom I had subsequent correspondence, or from anyone else.

I ~~see~~ also published (page 598) an FBI Laboratory photograph of the front of the President's shirt that I got from the Department of Justice via FOIA but the Warren Commission did not get or even ask for. (xerox copy enclosed.) This official but suppressed¹ evidence makes it without question that the damage to the neckband could not have been caused by any bullet, that the slits do not even ~~coincide~~ coincide and are not even of the same length.

It takes no specialized education to understand that this FBI picture alone, suppressed for a dozen years, utterly destroys the official "solution" to the "crime of the century," that one person fired all the assassination shots and that no more than three were fired.

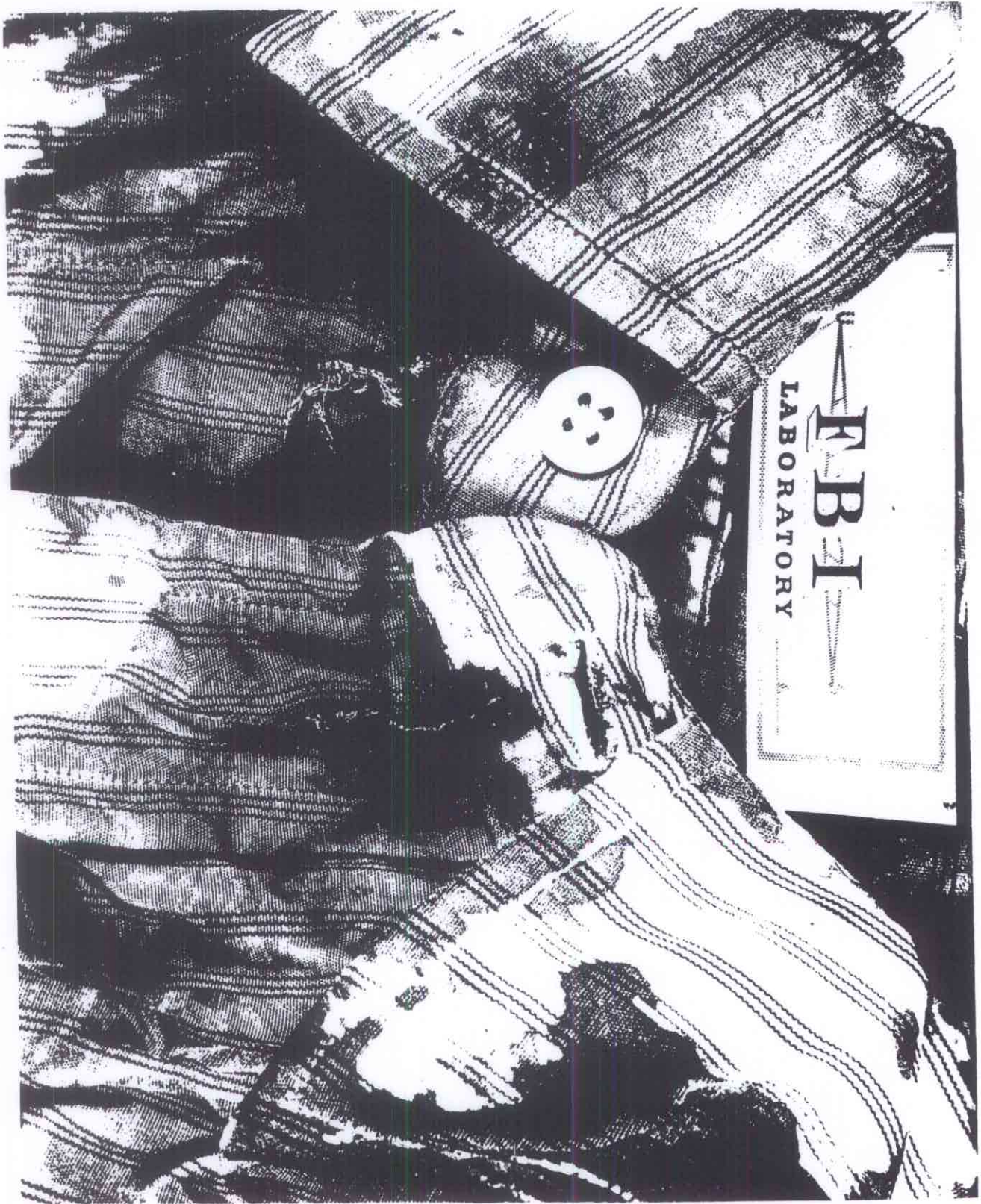
If in 29 years the Times had done any investigating at all, it would have learned that both the FBI and the Secret Service disagreed with this "solution" because both knew that the single-bullet theory is impossible.

In all quarter of a million JFK assassination, previously-withheld records I got through my lengthy and costly FOIA litigation, there is no FBI or Secret Service record that agrees with the Commission's "theory" and both agencies insist that one bullet did

not cause those seven, non-fatal injuries on both victims. *It yet HAT says it now and is not question*

And this, ~~separately~~ separately, disproves the theorized basic conclusion of the Warren Report and ~~of~~ the AMA's media event in which it gulled the uncritical Times and the rest of the major media not one element of which sought and published the official evidence ^{readily available} ~~of~~ ^{this} ~~official evidence was~~ ignored by AMA, the autopsy and other doctors and the Warren Commission, notoriously by Arlen Specter who invented an impossible non-conspiracy theory without which there could not have been the pre-determined and ordained ~~no~~-conspiracy "solution."

Although I am the opposite of the conspiracy-theorist ~~at~~ the Times makes me out to be and have debunked ~~these~~ ^{of} theories presented as solutions for almost three decades, when the major media did not meet its ~~traditional~~ obligations to ask questions, at least these conspiracy-theorists did that, as I did in my seven books and extensive FOIA litigation, ~~making~~ ^{making} the record for history that the major media failed to make.



education goal. Such an act by a teenager or family would have drawn kudos. But because her mother supported the family through public assistance, the teenager's frugality drew a stiff penalty from the Connecticut commissioner of income maintenance. The family had violated the federal AFDC eligibility rules that limits their assets to \$1,000, which would include the totality of property such as automobiles and children's bank accounts.

Not only was Mrs. Mercado ordered to repay the \$9,342 in benefits she received between Aug. 1, 1988,

Best evidence

5/21/92

With the press conference Monday by two retired naval doctors who performed the autopsy on the corpse of President John F. Kennedy, the nation was plunged once more into the grisly details of the Kennedy assassination and the even grislier arcana of the controversy about a supposed assassination conspiracy. But if the two doctors are right, their information may have brought us a bit closer to terminating the debate for good.

There are two main problems with the "lone gunman" theory endorsed by the Warren Commission. One is the highly peculiar coincidence that the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was himself murdered by Jack Ruby 48 hours after he supposedly shot Kennedy. Oswald's murder, conspiracy theorists often argue, was intended to silence and then frame the only man who could have explained the president's murder. The problem with that theory is that Ruby would have had to be part of the conspiracy, and we know that it was in fact a coincidence that Ruby happened to be in the police garage when police escorted Oswald through, giving him the chance to shoot.

The other problem arises from the two bullets that entered Kennedy's body. The Warren Commission held that he was shot twice by separate bullets, both from the same gun. One bullet, which passed through his neck, managed to strike Gov. John Connally, who was sitting in the front seat of the presidential limousine. Critics claim that no bullet could have behaved in this way without fragmenting. Moreover, film of the assassination shows that Kennedy's head jerked back when he was shot by bullet No. 2, indicating that he was shot from the front by another gunman.

Dr. James J. Humes and Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, retired naval officers, worked on Kennedy's body at Bethesda Naval Hospital the night he was shot. Conspiracy theorists have long muttered about the sinister goings-on at the autopsy — that it wasn't Kennedy's body, that evidence was fabricated and falsified to conceal a conspiracy. But both doctors, whose interviews will appear in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, affirm that this is nonsense.

Dr. Humes was in charge of the autopsy. He says it certainly was Kennedy upon whom he operated. He also says that his main finding was that the damage done to Kennedy's head could have resulted only from a single bullet entering from the rear and exiting from the front. Markings on the inside and outside of the skull were consistent with that hypothesis. And, he

dependent, punishing them for every move they make toward self-sufficiency, yet humiliates them for not moving on. It's the same system whose policies have encouraged broken families and discouraged fathers from facing their responsibilities in the care and feeding of their offspring.

If Congress wants to return welfare to the "temporary" public assistance it was meant to be, it should eliminate the perverse policies that penalize poor people when they have the enterprise to exercise personal initiative and responsibility.

says, "This is always the pattern of a through-and-through wound of the cranium. ... This is a law of physics and it is foolproof — absolutely, unequivocally and without question."

As for the jerking of Kennedy's head in the Zapruder film, this was due, says Dr. Humes, to the "jet propulsion effect" caused by brain tissue exploding from the exit wound. The bullet that hit Kennedy and also Mr. Connally also entered from the rear, and its exit wound was obscured by a tracheotomy performed at the Dallas hospital where other doctors had tried to save the president's life. In other words, the medical evidence from the autopsy, according to the doctors who performed it, is consistent with the conclusion that Kennedy was slain by a lone gunman firing from behind, which is where Oswald was located.

Of course, this doesn't satisfy the conspiracy buffs, many of whom make a pretty good living at their profession of casting doubt on the Warren Commission and grasping at any whip with which to beat it. Harold Weisberg, author of several books on the Kennedy assassination, discounted the doctors' evidence. He questions whether, as *The Washington Post* reported, "a full-jacketed military bullet such as those fired from the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas" could have left the kind of fragments Drs. Hume and Boswell said they found by X-rays of Kennedy's head during the autopsy.

How, we'd like to know, does Mr. Weisberg know what kind of bullet was fired? Most conspiracy theories reject the view that Oswald fired the bullets, that the assassins used Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found in the Book Depository, or that the shell casings found there were those of the fatal bullets. If these weapons were not the ones used, how come Mr. Weisberg can be so sure about how the real bullets would have behaved? In order to discount the doctors' evidence, he has to assume a key part of the Warren Commission's argument, that the shell casings found were those of the bullets that struck Kennedy.

Conspiracy theorists are not likely to be deterred by evidence. Nevertheless, what Dr. Hume and Dr. Boswell had to say filled in more real blanks than the conspiracy mavens want to fill, and their evidence is welcome as a serious contribution to historical knowledge.

■ **Rep. Esteban Torres:** A recent editorial on legislation related to the Federal Reserve misidentified Rep. Esteban Torres, the chairman of a House banking subcommittee. The Times regrets the error.

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May 22, 1992

Letters to the Editor
The Washington Times
3600 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Sirs:

The attached letter is offered in response to your March 21, 1992 editorial, *Best Evidence*.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John W. Masland

John W. Masland
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703-323-7970

Your May 21 editorial, *Best Evidence*, was slightly illusive. You suggest that two doctors, Dr. James J. Humes and Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, appeared at a press conference with *new* information regarding their examination of the body of President John F. Kennedy on the evening of November 22, 1963. The fact is they neither appeared at the press conference nor provided new information. That much of the controversy about the assassination emanates from the autopsy rendered by these physicians is central to the issue of their credibility in 1992. Should you doubt that the autopsy performed on President Kennedy was shoddy, it need only be compared to Warren Commission Document 320, the autopsy performed by Dr. Earl Rose, then Medical Examiner in Dallas, on Lee Harvey Oswald. It is significant that Dr. Rose's autopsy of Oswald was not included in the Warren Report despite President Johnson's Executive Order 11130 directing investigation into the *subsequent violent death of the man charged with the assassination*. Comparison immediately reveals why Rose's autopsy wasn't included; it would have embarrassed the government's autopsy of the President.

Two facts regarding the President's autopsy are offered in light of your editorial:

(1) Dr.'s Humes and Boswell did not know that the anterior throat wound, which they thought was a simple tracheostomy, was in fact a bullet wound until the following day when Dr. Humes spoke with Dr. Malcom Perry in Dallas. A review of page 4 of the autopsy reveals the problem created when Dr. Humes describes the *...upper right posterior thorax...* wound as *...presumably of entry....* Continuing, he describes the anterior neck wound, which he never

examined as a bullet wound thusly: ...*The wound presumably of exit was that described by Dr. Malcom Perry of Dallas in the low anterior cervical region....* The operative term regarding the wounds being *presumably*. Autopsy reports should provide facts not speculation. The accepted exception being the autopsy of an assassinated President.

(2) The fact that the autopsy physicians did not completely trace the path of the bullet wound in the back created concern as to the accuracy of their connecting the wounds of the back and throat. This, coupled with their probe of the back wound which indicated one whose terminus could be felt with their fingers, vitiates the contention that the two wounds were entrance and exit wounds caused by the same bullet. The issue of why they did not trace the course of the bullet was best addressed by Dr. Pierre Finck, the third attending physician, when questioned during Jim Garrison's trial of Clay Shaw. Dr. Finck, when asked why they didn't trace the path of the bullet stated, under oath, that they were ordered not to. Whether Dr. Finck was truthful or not, the fact remains that they did not trace the course of the bullet. That this was a prime purpose of the autopsy has been overlooked.

Lastly, the role of Admiral George G. Burkely, personal physician to the President, has been ignored for thirty years. Admiral Burkely was one of few people present at every significant location the day of the assassination; in the motorcade and at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, in Air Force One during the return trip, and at Bethesda Hospital during the autopsy. Admiral Burkely signed President Kennedy's death certificate which coincidentally wasn't included in the Warren Report. The reason for its exclusion; his location of President Kennedy's wounds devastated the single bullet theory permitted by linking the back and throat wounds. He also verified the clinical drawings made during the autopsy but in the version reproduced in the

Warren Report this verification was conveniently and neatly excised. He was never called as a witness before the Warren Commission. The reason being his knowledgeability regarding Kennedy's death and the location of the wounds would have placed him at odds with the single bullet theory crafted from the flawed autopsy.

That the Times chooses to support the single gunman theory of the Warren Commission is unfortunate. Despite the rhetoric from both supporters and critics of the Warren Commission, one fact emerges from the debate and that is that all the facts are not known. That the critics and the public *don't know what they don't know* is not a cause for blame. It is the fault of a government which failed to fully and completely investigate the murder of a President and then failed to provide what it did know to the nation it serves. We may never know the full truth about the death of President Kennedy, but our best opportunity for discovery rests with the critics and an open minded and inquiring free press.