

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701  
10/27/77

Dr. Malcolm O. Perry  
Department of Surgery RF-25  
School of Medicine  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington 98195

Dear Malcolm,

Your letter dated the 13th did not reach the postage meter until the 24th. It came today. When I did not hear from you earlier I had to proceed without it. Whether or not I'll be able to do much more depends in large part on the courts and to a degree ~~with~~ on my health. What I have been attempting to do in this litigation is totally unrelated to any literary interest. In fact it contributes considerably to my not being able to do any writing. It is against every selfish interest.

Of course with time some recollections do dim. When there are those with an interest in creating confusion and when they have power confusion does result.

You have always been, as you say, cooperative and helpful. If you had not been I would not have considered asking you to execute an affidavit. I was aware of a problem with which it confronted you, one I have not mentioned. I also believe it presented an opportunity.

When I left our last interview I went to the Parkland lobby and made notes immediately. As soon as I could get to a typewriter I typed them up. In the affidavit I did not draw upon all you then said. There is nothing in the affidavit that does not come from this or the testimony before the Warren Commission or the White House transcript. It, by the way, is now in the court record, in full.

From your letter I take it you do not have the Warren Commission transcripts as printed. I'll be glad to provide them to you if you'd like. I'll have to look around and get a set I've not marked up not to influence you but I'll be only too glad to do it. You would also then find that I took nothing out of context and that in fact you were not asked about your consultation on Connally. You told me ever so much more about that than I drew upon.

To illustrate the problem your letter gives me I select the first convenient point to check. In the letter you say "Dr. Carrico was not a senior surgical resident; he was a first year resident." In your testimony upon which as I told you I did draw, you stated at 3H367, "For example, Dr. Carrico being the senior surgical resident in the area, at the time President Kennedy was brought into the emergency ~~room~~ suite..." And as to his being a first year resident, which I quote on the off chance that I misunderstood your testimony, in the same volume at the top of page 358 he testified to his internship "and then did a year of fellowship at the surgical department at Southwestern Medical School, followed by my surgical residency at Parkland Hospital." When asked he added "I am engaged in surgical residency which will qualify me for board certification." As you can see, "senior surgical resident" are your own words.

I don't believe I said that there is magical surgery, one that does not leave a mark of any kind. What I was addressing is what you believed to be damage caused by or as a consequence of the bullet and ~~times~~, in his efforts to circumvent that, attributed to you. You were pretty explicit about that and the comparison with small bodies was your own, not mine. As a matter of fact you were indignant in your account to me and as I did then I still believe your indignation was more than justified. What I have in my books on this is what I believe, that all of you people were imposed upon.

Another belief is that this is part of the continuing problem. I had hoped that with the passing of time and with the disclosures of evidence of the kind I have brought to

light over the years the uneasiness might have diminished more than it seems to have.

I also had hoped that while I am alive and can be of use, while I have the knowledge that comes from work nobody else has duplicated and while I have records that were withheld but in every detail supported what you and Dr. Carrico said, it might be possible to make an official record with those who at the time had first-hand knowledge of what the appeals court described as "the events." If I had been able to remain in Dallas longer this past June there are other of your former associates I would have sought out. One who had been spoken to by a friend of mine was pretty outspoken about the pressures and preconceptions from Washington.

Time does do things to memory. I wish I were less aware of this. Once I had photographic recall. Now I sometimes have trouble with names and even with how I have filed records and where I placed records I've not been able to file. So don't for a minute think I believe you are being either difficult or devious, the words you used. I do not. After I last saw you and Dr. Carrico I wrote exactly the opposite of both of you. I found both of you to be honest and formed the impression that you are both good human beings.

The shootings in Dallas were but the beginning of a long serious or trauma. From the time the child of one of the federal agents came up to me after a college appearance, eyes ~~was~~ wet, and we conversed briefly, I have had some awareness of the toll taken in some many lives. I wish it had been possible for me to relieve some of this. But all I can do is try to establish fact and make it available. If we cannot undo the past I would like to feel that we can improve the functioning of our basic institutions, especially in time of great crisis. They failed after the assassination of the President for whom I voted only because of the alternatives.

I do not know where this will go in court. The judge, of ~~an~~ unhidden partisanship, has from the first indicated he would pay no attention to the remand decision of the appeals court. He has said often enough that he would send me there again. Knowing this and to meet my obligations I've sought to make as full and as accurate a record as possible. It includes many exhibits, from unpublished FBI records to glossy prints of the pictures of which I sent you xeroxes or xeroxes of printed ones where I had no others. (If I sent you ~~any~~ glossys please look at the backs to determine if I asked for their return.) The real problems, if the appeals court does not just tire of the entire matter and again rules for me, will be my capabilities, given my limitations. For now, however, the record is closed. Nothing new can be used on appeal.

If you ever get near here or if I get a speaking engagement near you perhaps we can talk again. If you think of anything you have not said I'd certainly like to know it. My offers to you of access to my records stands if you develop any interest.

In Dallas you and Dr. Carrico were both helpful. I do appreciate it.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98195

*School of Medicine  
Department of Surgery*

October 13, 1977

Harold Weisberg  
Route 12  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harold:

I really don't know how to begin this letter, and I suppose I won't know how to end it either. I regret that I must take a position somewhat apart from that presented in the affidavit you submitted for my signature. I hope you take this in the spirit that it is offered, and realize that I do not mean to be obstinate. I have attempted throughout to be cooperative, but I honestly am not certain what my position should be in regard to the civil action you're taking.

The excerpts which you present in the affidavit are, I am sure, knowing how you work, taken directly from documented records and therefore probably quite accurate. Unfortunately, I don't have those records and I can't verify that that's what I said or did and my memory has not been sharpened by 14 years, so I cannot state with certainty as to the accuracy of the comments contained in your proposed affidavit.

There are obviously some things in the affidavit which are not exactly true, as far as I know. In addition, they are excerpted in such a fashion as to point up the conclusions that you wish to reach, and the scientist in me rebels at things being taken out of context. As you recall, this removal of certain thoughts and sentences from the context was the ploy used by the world press which got us into all this difficulty. Had they published in entirety the things that were said and done, at least by me, there would have been a lot less confusion as to what really occurred during those tragic days in November.

Let me give a few observations to emphasize my problem. To begin, Dr. Carrico was not a senior surgical resident; he was a first year resident in charge of the emergency room. He wasn't really preparing an apparatus to assist the president's respiration -- that was being done by an anesthesiologist. Jim was attempting to get an airway obtained. I was called to see Governor Connelly's wound, but I didn't really have an opportunity to examine the wound carefully as the operation was already in progress and I did not scrub but only peered over Dr. Shires' shoulder at what he had found. I cannot verify the business of a fragment of a half-inch under the skin and three and three-and-a-half inches from the wound; as a matter of fact that is not the way I recall it at all. I don't remember any fragment

Mr. Weisberg  
October 13, 1977  
Page 2

being removed and I made no conjecture as to the trajectory of any fragment. In fact, there was no evidence that wound went deep into the leg at all, as far as I remember. The boney fragment seen down in the bone could well have been there from previous times or unknown injuries. I know of no evidence that we uncovered at the time that would enable us to describe any trajectory.

I object to the aspects of "tooting my own horn" as it were, and would point out that the unsupported observations that I've had a lot of experience with wounds and knowledge of various kinds of ammunition and loaded my own ammunition and all that really does not verify any credentials. Again, in regard to Governor Connelly's wound, the incision was already made by Dr. Shires when I got to the operating room and I can't speak with authority as to whether the skin wound was made by that bullet; but on my peering over his shoulder I did not see evidence of a deeper wound, which I mentioned in my testimony.

I don't recall whether the Commission asked me about Governor Connelly's injuries or not and would be reluctant to testify that they did not since that is not within my recall. I have no way of knowing that Dr. Humes correctly understood me about the anterior neck wound or not -- that's pure speculation and I would think that type of hearsay is not useful at all. I do recall Mr. Specter asking me about whether I thought the interior wound was an entrance wound or an exit wound and we discussed that, but I just don't recall the contents of that discussion, although I assume it's present within the testimony, both when I was before the Warren Commission and also in my deposition.

Regarding the description of the wound, I gave that in the testimony and don't now remember the exact sequence or exactly what I said, so would not be able to verify what you say in the affidavit unless I had all that testimony in front of me, which I do not. I don't remember being asked about bruising, but I might well have been, and again that should be in the record as to whether or not it was there.

Concerning Item 19, at the press conference I did not state that the president appeared to have been shot from the front. I said that it could have been an entrance wound, but I qualified that statement on at least two occasions by saying that I did not know, nor did Dr. Clark know, how many bullet wounds there were and pointed out that this was conjecture on my part and I did not categorically state that he was shot from the front.

Regarding Item 21, about Governor Connally's wound, I don't know how much metal was deposited in the wrist and it was only a very cursory evaluation. I really don't feel qualified to say what the opinion of the other doctors who attended Mr. Connally were, and we'd have to depend on their testimony.

In Item 22, bruising of the president's pleura, you point out that no experienced surgeon would have caused this bruising in an adult, and that is not a statement I made. Bruising is a lay term for the presence of local bleeding which produces hematoma and blood staining, and as a matter of fact

Mr. Weisberg  
October 13, 1977  
Page 3

during any operation such side effects are unavoidable. Where one is incising tissue, clamping tissues and retracting tissues it's impossible not to produce some bruising. And I am equally certain I did not say that we avoid that when performing tracheotomies in children who have much smaller bodies and chest cavities.


Item 26: I don't know that my interpretation of those films and documents you sent to me confirms the belief I held at the time I treated him. The reproduction is of such poor quality I would never make such an opinion from looking at those, and never having had the opportunity to see the originals I can't comment on that.

Harold, I honestly don't intend to be difficult or devious, and have been very cooperative in the past with things that you needed, as you well know. I am not, however, disposed to signing an affidavit which clearly has many statements which in my mind are hazy, and calls for conclusions and hearsay testimony which I cannot verify nor even remember. Although I am sympathetic to your problem I would think that if you wish to continue with this civil action you can extract sworn testimony and use it as it appears in the depositions. Everyone would understand that I do not recall with certainty events that occurred that far back in such an emotional time and I am adamant in not attempting to give precise and specific details about those events to anybody inasmuch as there are almost certain to be inaccuracies.

I have given the other deposition and copy of the letter to Dr. Carrico for his evaluation and perusal and will leave it up to him as to what he wishes to do, without any coaching at all from me. He may elect to return it intact or to sign it or whatever. That's between you and Jim, and I will try to stay out of his decision-making process.

I hope you know that this in no way is directed at you personally, but is only an extension of the reluctance that I have demonstrated in the past to testify in specifics as regards things on which I have really no finite information.

Sincerely,

  
Malcolm O. Perry, M.D.

pb