

*Confidential*

RANDOLPH H. ROBERTSON MD  
SOUTHERN HILLS MEDICAL CENTER  
DEPARTMENT OF RADIOLOGY  
391 WALLACE ROAD  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37211  
OFFICE 615-781-4650  
FAX 615-377-8100

James Lesar Esq.  
AARC  
918 F Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004

February 4, 1994

Dear Jim:

You wanted me to write you and state my criticisms of David Mantik's ideas about the authenticity of the autopsy radiographs. I see two major categories of objections with the first being the questions raised as to the logic of the situation as opposed to the technical problems. No theory can be isolated from real world possibilities. Anything may be possible in this case but I feel that we really have to be anchored by the real probabilities that events occurred as anyone might postulate that they did.

The biggest logical objection I have is that if they really did fake the x-rays why would they do so in a way that would completely repudiate the autopsy conclusions. David has also told me that he thinks that there was a piece of lead near the back of the skull up high but that the 6.5 mm fragment was added to the AP view to further implicate Oswald as this was the size of the bullet he used. If they went to all this trouble I would have expected this to have been noted in official reports at that time but this was never done. Why go to all this trouble if you are not going to use or benefit from these efforts. How did the plotters know that JFK would be struck in the head or that they would actually need to fake skull x-rays. The language of the autopsy report is stated in such a way that you realize they are trying to coverup the fact verbally that the radiographic appearance of the lead particles on the x-rays **which they only saw the night of the autopsy** did not match their proposed trajectory. I also have an inkling that they think that the lead fragment in the back of the head got there from a ricochet off the street which I think is highly unlikely.

If they went to all the trouble to fake the skull x-rays, why did they not do the same with the chest x-rays? The single bullet theory was not dreamed up for several months so if someone really wanted to convince people that the bullet did transit they could have faked the x-rays better to support the transit theory.

David also has said that the "big white patch" was put on the back of the skull x-ray to hide the large area of bone that was missing there because a bullet exited out the back of the head. If this was so crucial I wonder why they did not burn the autopsy descriptive sheet which has the 10 X 17 cm area drawn in as missing. Humes destroyed all the other autopsy notes except this one. Anyone who has a ruler can figure out that some of the back of the head had to be missing to accommodate this size defect. This is where I disagree with them about actually how that 10 X 17 cm area is measured. They want to have it so that the skull is missing far down in the back of the head to match the Parkland doctor's observations and to allow for there to have been actual damage to the cerebellum.

If you actually look at the x-rays carefully you can see that the damage to the skull is consistent on both views which would negate the added bone in the back of the head argument. You also have to realize that there is complete coherence of the metallic particle distribution on both lateral views. These particles extend both in the dark area in front and the supposed added on white area in the back of the head. This would be nearly impossible to accomplish.

We know that they in all probability destroyed certain photos which were taken at the autopsy, why not do the same for the x-rays. There has never been any strong compulsion on the part of the government to keep all the autopsy materials, why keep x-rays around that destroy the official story.

To put this all into perspective I will put it like this. When this case started there was an immediate discrepancy between the observations at Parkland and the objective medical evidence present at Betheseda where an actual autopsy was performed and the true extent and nature of the wounds were found. It is some critics undying allegiance to the eyewitness testimony from the doctors at Parkland Hospital that does not allow these people to progress on this case. If you want to believe that there was cerebellum on the cart then you will be convinced that all the objective medical evidence in this case is fake. They have no way to reconcile things but to dream up body snatching fairy tales or believe in some superconspiracy with legions of government agents being involved in a coverup that is massive in scale and perfect in execution because none of these forgers has come forward.

As far as the technical aspect of David's theory goes, this is where he will have the hardest time proving his case if people do not immediately realize the logical and commonsense reasons to discard his theory in the first place. His basic idea is that a copy of the original was made and then this was used as a template for a second copy to be made adding on the "big white patch" in the back of the head to coverup all that bone that was missing. Immediately problems arise and I would suggest you have your wife explain some of the aspects to you. Copy films are made using light transmission but the films present in the Archives are actual x-ray films made by an exposure to X-RAYS. David has not shown how you can take a copy film and somehow transfer this back on to x-ray film. A very big problem for David which creates a major hurdle right out of the starting blocks.

In addition to this there is the problem with grid lines. One would have to line up with exact precision the grid lines with the grid lines on the piece of bone or great white patch or whatever was added back there to cover up the big hole. David also seems to forget that beside this there are vascular markings present in this "big white patch" which could be matched up and analyzed against pre-mortem films.

Next there are fingerprints left in the wet emulsion which might be matched up to Custer or Reed the x-ray techs who supposedly not been involved in the coverup.

Any number of problems with the processing of the films could be called upon to account for the back area of the film being light. These include film/screen contact, temperature and time of processing, how the films were held while they were being dried, the exposure factors of the particular film that was used that night, whether or not a phototimer was used when the films were taken, whether the films might have been fogged or any other defects in the film as well as numerous other technical factors. You may be getting a hint of the technical factors that could be responsible for the density readings that he has found. Any single one of these or any combination of these factors could be invoked to explain his findings. In my opinion his statements at a news conference concluding that the x-rays were forgeries before eliminating the aforementioned causes was rather premature. This coupled with some obvious illogical aspects of what we are seeing makes me think that we are really looking at the original films.

When one carefully analyzes the objective medical evidence in the case you will find a good correlation of the photographic and radiographic evidence, they support each other well. What they do not support is the eyewitness testimony from Parkland. You can't reconcile the discrepancies. Somebody is right and somebody is mistaken or lying. Anatomically the cerebellum lies so low in the back of the head that even if the Parkland eyewitnesses were describing the hole in the back of the head correctly it is not likely that the cerebellum would have been damaged.

Another technical factor that I failed to point out is that the grid lines extend over both portions of the film that are supposed to be composite and the darker areas of the film which are part of the original. It should also be noted that although the metallic fragment in the back of the head was not specifically noted in the autopsy report, it was noted contemporaneously in the Sibert and O'Neill report. Another aspect is the pencil lines which I raised with David even before he got into the Archives. This argument goes like this. If the x-rays we now have are fake then they had to be made before Ebersole drew the pencil lines on them for there to be graphite on the films. In addition if Ebersole was presented with fake x-rays one month after the assassination then how did he know where to start his trajectory lines. To argue that these are anything but trajectory lines I think is foolish and goes against Ebersole's own testimony as well as common sense. Remember that these lines were described as angle lines before the Clark panel used the x-rays to change the location of the entry wound. Until that time they could be called angle lines.

I think that the totality of the evidence both on a technical and commonsense basis dictates that these are the original x-rays. Any attempts to discredit them as authentic are bound to end in failure. The x-rays demonstrate that JFK was shot twice in the head and this makes the most sense given the backward snap of the head and the HSCA's conclusion that a shot **was** fired from the right front of the motorcade. It is unfortunate that someone went into the Archives with the supposition that the materials were fake and has committed himself to this position prematurely before thinking through the material carefully. This position is readily accepted by many in the medical evidence area already and there is a large sympathetic audience for this position at the present time. There are popular authors who are also getting behind this new "evidence" even before it has been proven.

I have no intention now or in the future to be associated with this position. If David is actually able to prove that they are fake, I would obviously accept the fact at that time. It will be a bittersweet moment for us because we may have proven that there was a forgery perpetrated at some time in the past but we will have lost the only objective evidence from which to draw our conclusions on in the medical evidence area. I am not knowingly going to book passage on the Lusitania. They are going to be discredited and I have no intention of having what I consider the most rational explanation of the head wounds to date go down with them. If someone else comes up with a better explanation than I will surely consider its merits. I have yet to hear any and don't expect to in a climate that presupposes that the autopsy materials are fake.

I hope this has given you some ideas about the actual complexity involved in proving that these materials are not authentic. This proof will have to stand up independent of the Parkland eyewitnesses and be based on scientific fact. I await a final paper from David on the subject before actually closing the door but I think it is highly unlikely he will be able to do so in the face of critical analysis.

Sincerely,

Randy

