

Dr. Donald B. Thomas
1209 West third St.
Weslaco, Texas

5/8/01

Dear Dr. Thomas,

Harold Weisberg asked me to put this document together for him. As you know he is 88 years old and goes from day to day. But despite the weight of years his memory is still remarkably sharp when it comes to past events, especially as they relate to the JFK assassination.

I am a retired professor of History at Hood College. I have some years on me as well but I am finishing up a study of the Warren Commission and so I am familiar with much of the case.

Our original plan was for me to cut a tape with Hal in response to your article in "The Forensic Science Society" publication. We did cut the tape but Hal's voice was not strong enough to make it a worthwhile exercise. So we decided to try and reduce it all to a narrative and send it forward.

Hal wanted to begin with some background. So here goes.

HSCA's Robert Blakey started out with the intent of shooting down all the Commission's critics. It backfired when the MIT crowd came up with their analysis of the tape.

Blakey was now hot to trot. He wanted the FBI to review the tape re: The Shot from the Grassy Knoll. Blakey was now infatuated with his fantasy of a Mafia conspiracy. The FBI refused.

After HSCA disbanded, Blakey turned to the Justice Department. The JD selected the National Research Council (NRC) to review the tape because it was not subject to FOIA, therefore no peer review was possible.

Hal then went into the Katzenbach memo, frequently cited but rarely understood (see enclosed). The revealed records show that once Oswald was himself assassinated Katzenbach, Hoover, LBJ, and Moyers, engaged in a series of phone calls to one another Sunday (11/24) evening. The end result was the Katzenbach memo. Katz wrote it in longhand after these calls and had his secretary type it up on Monday. This memo is the formalizing of what could be called the "Official Solution" to Dallas. All of it done, of course, before a shred of evidence was examined.

Blakey's initial approach can be appreciated by the way he formatted the hearings. He began each with a narrative on a critic and how they would be refuted. (Weisberg was the exception; his work was never contested.)

Hal is not certain, but he believes that Blakey received the police tape from Gary Mack, who got it from Mary Farrell, who got it from a woman who got it from a Dallas

cop. (A real daisy chain that with lapsed time is best left filed away under "bewildering speculations." Hal has a source on this if you want it.

Hal makes the interesting point that Blakey went for the tape because it saved him the embarrassment of being saddled with the bankruptcy of his investigation. He now had entrée for wheeling out his organized crime hypothesis.

Somewhat disjointed but it might be useful to know follows.

Hal's JFK archive is now at Hood College. We hope to get the whole collection on CDs and have the whole thing up and running by Fall of this year. Weisberg has about 300,000 pages of FBI, Commission, JD, CIA stuff on the assassination. He therefore has more than the FBI released in 1977 and 1978 (total about 90,000 pages.) These 90,000 pages are about what the HSCA worked with. Only about 8 sources got these limited 90,000 pages. So other than the National Archives at College Park, the Weisberg archive is the largest private collection of documents on the JFK assassination. Since I have used NARA's JFK Collection I can vouch that Hal's archive, even though limited in comparison (NARA has about 4 to 5 million pages of documents), it is more accessible.

What follows now were initially my backup notes with the tape we cut but turned out to be functionally worthless. All I can do is give you a summary of this part.

@ FBI avoided any thing that did not point to the pre-ordained "Official Solution"—Oswald did it and there was no conspiracy. From my own work I can attest that this is a documented fact.

Eg., Finding the rifle. This demonstrated to officialdom that Oswald did not commit the crime. No shots from the SE corner of the 6th floor. All of this exonerating evidence was suppressed by the FBI, WC, and JD.

@ Grassy Knoll. A shot or shots without question. See Zapruder's emotional testimony before the WC. Z told the Secret Service that a shot came from over his shoulder. (See the upcoming book by Dave Wrono published by Kansas Univ. Press.) One shot from the GK could have been from a .30.30 mm rifle. See Humes WC testimony about dust-like particles when they looked at the X-ray of JFK's head. This was confirmed by FBI agents Sibert and O'Neill. I also found a CIA document in which the CIA believed that two or three different types of ammo were used. I have to add here that all this became academic (if that's the right spin) when the so-called "Magic Bullet" or CE 399 was "discovered" in Connally's stretcher at Parkland. If you read the WC testimony of Tomlinson, Weston, and Jamison and SS agent Johnson its clear that this 6.5 mm bullet was planted in a stretcher that was not Connally's carriage.

@ One or two shots from the front. The hole in JFK's back was an exit wound. Hal has the Time slides of the last 9 Zapruder frames and they show no blood on back of JFK's head or dishevelment of his hair.

Hollow nose

@ The first shot came from the front. Drs. Malcolm Perry and Carrico (his WC testimony. See exchange with Dulles confirm this. I am sure you are aware of Perry's news conference on 11/22.

@ Hal conversation with Perry were Perry was brought into examine Connally's thigh wound. The wound was not made by a pristine bullet (CE #399) but a sliver of bullet metal.

@ Might want to check with Hal's "Photographic Whitewash" where he cites CIA interpretation of Z film. They have first shot at Z 190 or even earlier. This means it had to come from some other building other than TSBD because the live oak block shot at Z 190 or earlier.

@ Garrison Trial. Dr. Finck was forced under unfriendly examination to admit that Bethesda Navy admirals (Galloway and Kinney) controlled the autopsy and blocked any dissection of JFK's non-fatal back or front-to-back wound.

@ Destruction of the first autopsy draft protocol as claimed by Humes at his March 1964 WC testimony where he was led by Specter in the questioning. Hal has records that this was a lie. Humes destroyed nothing; but this draft was destroyed later or memory-holed a la Orwell after Oswald was assassinated. If you compare the holograph of the second autopsy draft (post-Oswald assassination) you will find that even this document does not mention a hole in the back of JFK's head.

@ Despite all the Sturm and Drang by critics about the falsification of the JFK X-rays and autopsy photos there is nothing to this. There was no need to do this.

@ Connally's wounds could not have come from CE#399. I think that's as clear as it can be. CE#399 did not lose enough metal to have produced this wound. What is missing from this bullet was taken from it by FBI agent Robert Frazier. (My own suspicions are that what he cratered out of the base of the bullet are those metal frags that Guinn was given to run NAA tests on by the HSCA.

@ Hal believes there were at least 5 shots, possibly more. He feels that some of the shooting was with silencers.

He appreciated your work and hopes you can go forward with it. If you have any questions please feel free to call him (301-473-8186). The best times are on Saturday and Sunday. Much of the week is taken up with dialysis and other medically-related appointments, etc.

Best,

Dr. Jerry McKnight (for Hal).