

12/6/90

Dear Uyril,

We agree, of course, what is going on is terrible and tends to both obfuscate all and to deprecate all criticisms and critics.

There is but one mention of you in Moore's book. I enclose a copy of that page.

If you do not know, the so-called briefer is Wifton. He spoke that way pretty widely at the time.

What also is less than helpful is what I regard as the utter insanity of Bud and his AARC not only in supporting White and getting him all the attention he got but in persisting there is something to it. He spoke to me a couple of weeks ago and was still very intense about it. Since then I've heard of his seeking help or information in support of that concoction.

And then about two weeks ago Jerry Hemming and Roy Hargraves were here. They said they were working for Bud on the White stuff, seeking ways of supporting the White fiction.

Aside from all other considerations, I believe it is unwise to have two men with their pasts in any way involved.

If you are not familiar, I'll fill you in.

Best wishes,

in the Zapruder film. Why? Because the critics, like circus performers, are aware that the public pays attention to the more morbid aspects of this case. Thus, they focus on them.

Most inexcusable has been the publication by David Lifton (and more recently, Robert Groden) of actual autopsy photos. Were I the dead President's surviving brother, or his son, I would certainly have a difficult time reconciling the public's need to know with my personal sense of dignity and privacy. But such considerations seldom stop the critics. I choose to honor ethics, taste and the dignity of the President.

Perhaps no other chapter in this book will more clearly differentiate me from the tasteless mob. I will not feed on the bloody frenzy they have so successfully generated. I feel less than comfortable, as a historian, with discussing the comments and criticisms of the autopsy photos and x-rays without publishing them. But I will do so, nonetheless. If you're anxious to prove or disprove what I've written, you can go and contribute to Lifton and Groden and cast your vote in favor of their blatant sensationalism.

I mentioned earlier that Lifton's entire book, *Best Evidence*, is based on a chance statement made by a pair of FBI agents after first viewing the President's head wound. His body alteration thesis is a last ditch effort to find some basis of support for the arguments that more than one assassin shot at President Kennedy. If you've read the book, you'll know that Lifton's theory is as ludicrous as it sounds.

Groden on the other hand, adopted a different approach. Since nothing in the autopsy photos and x-rays indicated even one shot from the front, and Groden has been claiming for years that there were several, he charges that the autopsy material has been retouched, painted over, and grossly misrepresented.

The problem, in both cases, is that neither Lifton nor Groden are qualified to read and interpret x-rays and autopsy photos.\* I will be first to tell you that I don't either. So, I did what the clear-thinking historian would do in this kind of situation. I asked those who were qualified to interpret what they had seen to do so.

Dr. John Lattimer admittedly carries a pro-Warren Commission

\* Neither do some respected critics. When Dr. Cyril Wecht told his biographers what he had seen after his examination of the autopsy materials, one of them responded that Wecht "couldn't even read x-rays."

bias. But he is a physician, and has spent years mastering the interpreting x-rays. When Groden claimed that in x-rays of the dent's head, the right eye socket was missing (the right eye is in the autopsy photos), I wrote to Lattimer. Since he had viewed material, I wanted to know if there was any truth in Groden's, that someone had altered the autopsy photos. Lattimer replied hand-written letter:

*"That line of breakage is well above the eye socket and face. It is where the 'frontal' bone attaches to the upper part of the skull, as it develops. X-rays penetrate through and through, making relationships hard visualize. Thus, there is no discrepancy . . . there was no loss of bone from the face."* 1/12/64

Obviously, this is work Groden should have done before I sat down at a typewriter. That he didn't do it can be attributed of three reasons:

1. Groden believed he possessed the necessary education and experience read x-rays, as far as I know he has never been to medical school,
2. Groden simply didn't for whatever reasons do the research and assume the book could stand on its own merits without the effort on his part.
3. Groden already knew that professional analysis would disprove his outlandish theories, and thus failed to seek an outside opinion.

For which explanation would you opt? But remember, we're playing "Let's Make A Deal," or at least, I'm not. We're adding historical record, and what we do should be responsible and documented. Obviously, those constraints hold little weight Groden.

The bullet wound in the back of President Kennedy's head is fairly high on the rear of the skull where the bone is beginning to curve forward. Thus, the entry wound was oval-shaped, not round. President's head was tilted downward at the time of impact, it is argued that the bullet skidded along the skull a short distance entering the cranial vault.<sup>4</sup>

The location of the entry wound makes two things evident. First, Oswald came within an inch or so of missing the President all together. Second, the autopsy doctors erred by placing the wound mu-