

OHIO STATE CORONERS ASSOCIATION

UPDATE

June 1988

520 King Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43201 • 614/462-5290

1988 OSCA ANNUAL SEMINAR REPORT

William R. Adrion, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer

Due to the many requests for transcripts of Dr. Wecht's presentation and review of the J.F. Kennedy Assassination for the 1988 OSCA Seminar, we will present the verbatim transcription. Cyril Wecht, M.D., J.D. was the Coroner for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh) for many years and is one of the few expert forensic pathologists to have actually examined the physical evidence from the Kennedy Assassination. Due to the length of this transcription, we will publish it in four issues of the UPDATE.

As requested at the 1987 Seminar, Dr. Justin Krause of Greene County and his committee prepared new By-laws and they were presented at the 1988 business meeting, and were accepted as presented. One of the important changes in the By-laws is the type of membership now available in the Ohio State Coroners' Association.

Membership shall be open to all Coroners, pathologists and other licensed physicians who have responsibilities in connection with the

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**MEET THE NEW
OSCA
OFFICERS
AND
DIRECTORS**

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FORENSIC REVIEW OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION BY CYRIL WECHT, M.D., J.D.

(Transcription of the lecture given by Dr. Wecht at the 1988 OSCA Seminar)

Thank you very much, Dr. Eicher, Dr. Geron, Dr. Adrion, Dr. Eicher and members of the Ohio State Coroner's Association, and members of their staff, and guests: I appreciate having been invited, and I'm very happy to be with you this evening. The subject is always interesting to the American public, and this is a propitious time, it's now a half a year before the twenty-fifth commemorative anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. There will be a tremendous amount of programming taking place beginning early November. The exact anniversary this year will be on Tuesday, November 22, 1988. There will be a very fine ninety minute or possibly two hour program that London Independent TV is putting on that will be programmed throughout the British Commonwealth which they expect to have marketed through one or more of the networks in this country. And Nova, the educational channel program—or production organization, will be having a program also of somewhere between one to two hours. I'm sure that ABC, CBS, NBC will also have programs, and I very much recommend to you, if you did not see it last year, the program that undoubtedly will be shown again this year. It's a five-and-a-half-hour presentation called "Lee Harvey Oswald On Trial". This is done by the British television, also on London Weekend TV. It is a fascinating drama, and you would be enthralled by the program. The two trial attorneys are Jerry Spence for the defense, who is one of the foremost trial attorneys in the United

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States of America. He handled the Karen Silkwood case. And the attorney for the prosecution is Vincent Bulliosi from the Charles Manson cases, the author of "Helter Skelter". It was filmed in London, and except for the judge and jurors, the two attorneys and the two pathologists, Charles Petty for prosecution and me for the defense, everyone else is exactly that person whom he or she is supposed to be and would have been had the trial taken place back in 1964. They brought over a judge from Texas and a jury from Texas, and then, as I say, all the other people are the exact witnesses that would have been called, among many others. But it is tremendous theater. *Time* Magazine called it the best courtroom drama every made. They did an outstanding job. If that's shown, try to find the time to watch it. In any event, most of you are old enough to remember as adults or intelligent mid-to-late teenagers, what you were doing back in 1963. There are some younger people in the room who don't, of course, have any personal recollections, and the only things they know about the assassination are what they have read and heard. And except for those people who have taken the time to read some articles and books, there is painfully little from my perspective, most of which is quite inaccurate, that is portrayed in the history books that students in high schools and elementary schools learn from. Let me refresh your memories, take you back,—to that very tragic event, and then essentially in chronological fashion, hurdle through the years to the present time, and let you know where things are, and what yet might possibly be done.

It was on Friday, November 22, 1963 that John F. Kennedy arrived in Dallas. 1964 was a re-election year. Texas was a major state. The South was very unhappy about John F. Kennedy. There was still lingering anti-Catholic feeling, and probably of greater political importance was the belief, the continuing perception that he was going to be ramming all kinds of civil rights legislation down their throats. Interestingly just as a parathetical aside, all of that civil rights legislation, which the South feared, did come to pass under the realm of Lyndon Johnson, a Southerner. Kennedy started things, but had not really done that much in the area. Not that it wasn't in his heart and in his mind, but it had not yet become a political reality. The South was a seething cesspool of political hatred in many pockets. And that's important for you to understand. When you talk about the John F. Kennedy assassination and you think about what might have happened, why, and how those events that transpired thereafter, as well as the assassination itself, could have taken place in the United States of America in this era, it's important, it's very relevant for you to know what was going on. For those of us who have lived in the North all our lives and have never spent any time in the South back then, you can't really know. You've heard a thousand stories, but I can assure you, as intelligent and well read as I thought I might have been and as interested in politics and government as I thought I might have been, until I spent two years at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, 1959-1961, I never understood what it really was like to be in the dark deep South any more than I could really have appreciated what it's like to be in South Africa until I went there some years ago and saw some of those things for myself. The day of Kennedy's arrival in Dallas, the major newspaper had received and accepted for publication a full page ad with a black rim border to suggest an obituary notice that contained

some very strong language against Kennedy. Tens of thousands of handbills were distributed in the streets of Dallas that day, presumably as we come to learn, paid for by money of the Hunt family—H.L. Hunt. And that was in the form of a U.S. Post Office Ten Most Wanted kind of presentation of Kennedy's picture and the caption beneath, "Wanted for Treason". And when it was announced in many schools in the South that the President of the United States had been shot and killed that day, there are numerous recorded documented instances of school children bursting out into applause. I know you all know, that kind of hatred comes from the home, from six or an eight or a ten or a twelve or a fifteen year old kid doesn't come from his or her mind and heart. What do the kids possibly know and feel? But, that was the situation.

Just a few days before Kennedy was shot, Adlai Stevenson, Ambassador to the United Nations, twice presidential candidate, had been physically jostled and spat upon in the streets of Dallas. That was the background. Well, despite all that, Kennedy's arrival was greeted with great enthusiasm, at one point in the motorcade, Mrs. Connally, the Governor's wife, turned to him and said, "You can't say that Dallas doesn't love you, Mr. President". And that's the way it seemed. It was all flowers and kudos when the motorcade came into the city from the old airfield called Love Field. They came down Main Street and then took a right onto Houston at a place called Dealey Plaza and then left on Elm Street. This was exactly that Friday. And as the car straightened out and proceeded down Elm Street, the shots rang out. John Kennedy was seated in the back of the car, his wife to his left. Directly in front of the President was Governor John Connally, and to his left, Mrs. Connally. There was no barricade or partition of any kind between the Kennedys and the Connallys. In the front seat of the car were two secret service agents, Greer Kelleman and the shot that struck the President caused him to slump forward somewhat, and his hands came up in a reflex action toward his mouth and throat. Then Governor John Connally was struck. You'll see some of these things depicted on slides in a short while. And then the fatal shot was the one that hit Kennedy in the head, and there's a crimson burst as his head literally explodes, and his body, very interestingly, hurdled back and to the left, literally onto his wife's lap. The car sped quickly to Parkland Memorial Hospital, a short distance away, arriving about 12:35. They had about eight doctors ready, specialists in all the fields, one of them a bright surgical resident, even recalled reading somewhere at that time, it was kind of a deep dark secret that John Kennedy had Addison's Disease, and he was prepared with steroids. They did everything they could, but it was impossible to save his life. He was officially pronounced dead at 1:00, two and a half minutes after his arrival, thirty minutes after the shooting. The doctors at Parkland saw a big gaping defect on the right side of the head with destroyed absent calvarium and hemorrhagic lacerated brain. They saw a wound in the front of the neck in the midline, at the level of the knot of the tie. They did not undress the body. There was no further examination. Kennedy had a corset like garment which he wore because of his back from an injury in World War II. There was a mistake in terms of a news conference by the doctors in which they permitted themselves to be asked and they answered questions about the number of shots and trajectory and things like

which set the stage for some confusion, but that would not have been a terrible error if the ensuing events had not occurred.

Well, under Texas law there was no question but that the autopsy should have been performed there. Indeed the medical examiner, his staff were there to assume jurisdiction over the body. The secret service agents and the FBI quite literally forced their way out, guns were almost drawn, numerous profanities and other very strong epithets were tossed about, and threats were made. They took the body quite illegally from the hospital, went to the airfield. The body was placed on the plane, and after Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as President by Federal Judge Cyrus Hughes, they took off for Washington. Initially, believe it or not, there was talk about whether or not an autopsy would be done at all. Then, well, maybe a very limited autopsy, and they wouldn't examine the head. And then they began to think and talk some more, and they came to the realization, well, we better do an autopsy. Now, this is extremely important, and of course very—very relevant and meaningful for this kind of an audience in particular. To do this post mortem examination of the President of the United States of America, in order to determine all the things that are necessary, in any homicide, only now we're dealing with the President, but even if you had this homicide involving anyone else, multiple gunshot wounds, what's your entrance, what's your exit, what's your trajectory, what are the lines of fire, which were fatal, etc.? To do this autopsy in the United States of America in 1963, they didn't call upon an Milton Helpren from New York, a Russell Fisher from Maryland, an Alan Moritz from Cleveland, and Geoffrey Mann from Virginia. No. They called upon two naval pathologists at Bethesda who were, and as far as I know, are quite competent hospital pathologists. I do not denigrate hospital pathology anatomic and clinical pathology at all. I am involved in both, and in fact, it is a very important specialty. It is simply that, a hospital pathologist who has had no training or experience or practice in forensic pathology, is not a forensic pathologist, and there's a hell of a big difference between doing a hospital autopsy and doing a medical/legal autopsy. These people that I mentioned who are known to pathologists and the long time Coroners in the room, were the outstanding forensic pathologists, and they were within an hour's driving or flying time of Washington, D.C. They were well known to the United States government. They have been used to teach at the AFIP. They have been used to teach medical and military pathologists for many many years and other officers. It isn't that forensic pathologists were unknown. They were used in aircraft crashes through World War II and thereafter, so by 1963 the United States government knew damn well what a forensic pathologist was. And this point cannot be emphasized enough, because this is the crux of the matter.

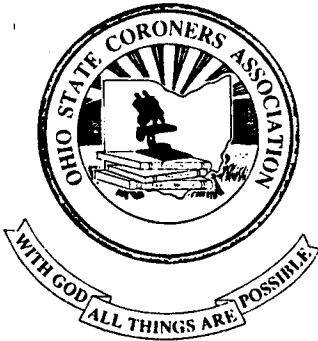
You see, what if the President, instead of being shot that day, while stepping out of the bathtub had slipped on a wet mat and struck his head and was kind of fuzzy and an apparent concussion and who knows what else? Well, you wouldn't hesitate, if I asked you what kinds of specialists would have been called in to examine him, certainly a neurologist, maybe a neurosurgeon, an ophthalmologist to look at the eyes, maybe an internist for an overall view, or so. You certainly would not have expected a dermatologist or an obstetrician to be called in under those circumstances, would you? This is what happened

in America. Well, let's see, is my criticism unjust, is it exaggerated, is it based upon some sense of official chauvinism as a forensic pathologist? These two pathologists, Humes and Boswell, at Bethesda, then were in charge. As an afterthought they called in Pierre Finck from the AFIP who was an Army man. He had had some fairly limited administrative experience in forensic pathology, not a great deal of actual hands-on performance of medical-legal autopsies. In any event, Pierre Finck was brought in, junior in rank, an Army man in a naval setting, and was extremely uncomfortable and extremely frustrated. Back then, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences meeting in 1964 and 1965 before things got real hot and heavy, they shouted a little bit with Pierre, and while he was quite restrained and a very proper Swiss gentleman, and a very excellent physician and person, he did express some thoughts. And later on he expressed other thoughts, under oath, in a Clay-Shaw trial in New Orleans. When it was asked of him repeatedly, and the judge finally insisted that he answer, whether or not there was any kind of control in the autopsy room, Dr. Finck then stated in a very soft voice with his head down, yes, there had been—there had been an Admiral whose name he did not remember, who had ordered the pathologist not to trace out the bullet wounds in the back or in the front, and who had ordered him to do certain other things, like not mentioning the adrenal glands. Having nothing to do with the death of the President or the assassination, but just to show you, to corroborate, to emphasize, the control. You could imagine telling Milton Helpren, or Alan Moritz, or Russell Fisher, or Geoffrey Mann, don't mention the adrenal glands, and don't trace out the bullet wounds. There's no way. But if you got Admirals and Generals and top level secret service and FBI agents, three dozen people wandering in and out of the autopsy room, and you've got that kind of authority with other military officers, you tell them what to do, you can be very certain that they will do what they are instructed to do. And that's why they were chosen.

But what is it that they did? What did they see? They saw the big gaping defect on the right side of the head that I'd mentioned before, and then they saw another wound, which they placed four inches down below the level of the top of the head in the right occiput. And they concluded that the bullet that struck the President in the head, had entered in the right occipital area, moved tangentially forward to the right, blowing out brain and bone, and had fragmented. There were many small pieces of metal found, but no significant size piece of a slug. Then they found a hole in the President's back, which they located about six inches below the crest of the top of the shoulder on the right side. They probed with their fingers, probed with instruments, couldn't feel or find the bullet. They took x-rays, no bullet. They did the autopsy, no bullet. Very fascinating situation. Well, where's the bullet? back at Bethesda, the sweat pouring down their heads, the

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FORENSIC MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

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Candidate at the Ohio State University College of Medicine

What does the above title suggest? Upon dissection we recognize the first word "forensic," whose meaning is readily discernible (at least to many of us!). However, the second part "molecular biology," may not be as apparent. Molecular Biology is briefly defined as the study of chromosomal 'genes' and the functional characteristics they determine. Since material in this article will focus on a certain aspect of molecular biology, a few introductory concepts will be worth noting at the onset. Recall that chromosomal genes are comprised of DNA, the molecule that is the repository of genetic information and so may be considered the fundamental molecule of life. Let's consider two important implications that can be derived from this concept. First, each individual has a genetic construct which is entirely unique. Just as no two people have similar fingerprints (dermatoglyphics), neither will they have a similar genome. In fact, the

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Continuation of the FORENSIC REVIEW OF JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

Cyril Wecht, M.D., J.D.

Well, where's the bullet? Just then information comes in relayed by the FBI and a phone call from Dallas that an aide to this man by the name of Darrell Thomas in about an hour and a half after the entire presidential entourage had left Parkland Hospital was running the elevator, and the doctor was trying to get to the Men's Room there in the basement. The corridor was blocked by a couple of stretchers. He went over to move the stretcher. He heard a noise on this metallic stretcher and lo and behold there was a bullet. "Well", said these pathologists back at Bethesda, the sweat pouring down their heads, the bullet hole in the back, no bullet, and three dozen people congregated around there, "we know what happened."

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LEGAL CORONER

William E. Kose, M.D., J.D.

The office of coroner is an ancient one, and is said to have evolved with the office of the sheriff, the two having been ordained together to keep the peace. In Ohio, the coroner can only exercise such powers and jurisdiction as are provided by statute, basically in Chapter 313 of the Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C.). The duties are largely ministerial in character, though certain duties are, in a limited sense, quasi judicial. A coroner is prohibited by O.R.C. 4705.01 from practicing as an attorney at law.

As used in the O.R.C. "coroner" means the coroner of the county in which death occurs or the dead human body is found. A coroner is elected every four years, those elections corresponding to the national presidential selection.

To be eligible for the office of the coroner, a person must be a physician who has been licensed to practice as a physician in Ohio for at least two

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Ready for this? When the President lay on his back in a supine position, they concluded, the pressure applied to the front of his chest for cardiac massage forced the bullet back through the same bullet track up through a seven by four (7X4) millimeter hole in his skin and gotten into his clothing then and was not seen or heard by anybody until it was fortuitously found later that afternoon. It's like, the next time you come into Pittsburgh to Fort Pitt you go in, you go in reverse, you go back, and the bullet just goes in and out like that. Forget edema, forget hemorrhage, forget everything that just goes like that. Okay. Well without—they concluded, preliminary autopsy findings were submitted to the President, to J. Edgar Hoover, and to Admiral Berkley, and they left for the day.

The next day, about eighteen hours or so later, they did what of course any competent forensic pathologist would have done in the first instance, certainly in a case like this, and that is, they called the doctors at Parkland to find out what they had seen and what they had done. I told you that the doctors at Parkland had seen a hole in the front of the neck, and I did tell you that Humes and Boswell and Finck saw a hole. Well, you don't have to be a forensic pathologist to see a hole in somebody's neck. How did they miss it? Very simple. You already know the answer, even if you didn't know it before, you've already got it figured out. It was a superimposed tracheostomy which the doctors in Dallas had done when they had ascertained that the bullet had ripped through the President's trachea, they reasoned quite logically, why try to close that up and deal with that wound and then make another incision for a tracheostomy? Let's use it. But they had to expand upon the skin margins in order to attach the cuff from the respirator. And so when the pathologist did the autopsy that night, being inexperienced in forensic pathology, having been instructed not to trace out the bullet holes through the back and in the front, and having failed to talk with the doctors at Dallas by phone, never knew—never knew that there was a bullet hole in the front of the President's neck! Well, how do you scramble now? The body's gone. The findings have been submitted. It's the next day. What do you do? Well, they said, having been given the information, as you and the rest of the world have been given, that Lee Harvey Oswald had been apprehended, that he was the sole assassin, that he did all of his firing from the Texas Schoolbook Depository, Sixth Floor, Southeast Corridor. They now knew where the shots had come from. They said, well, we'll put it together. The hole in the back was entranced. The hole in the front of the neck was exiting though we didn't recognize it, and the bullet that had fallen out on the stretcher, which we said last night, was from the President's back, today is now from the President's neck. It was moving through his neck at 2100 feet per second. It didn't strike any bone or cartilage, but when it hit the shirt collar, it stopped. A hell of a fine job of laundering by the Chinese launderer, with a tremendous amount of starch that it stopped that bullet right like that and just went right down into his shirt, and that's the bullet. Okay. So that took care of the situation for the time being.

Now, lo and behold, much more serious problems were to confront them shortly thereafter. Abraham Zapruder, businessman from Dallas, had bought a brand new eight millimeter Bell Howell camera to take pictures that day. And he was standing on the right side in front of the so called grassy knoll area, and as it turned out, he did the best photographic docu-

mentation of those tragic seconds when the President was shot and John Connally was wounded. Life Magazine bought that film from Zapruder. I had the opportunity at their invitation to study it at their headquarters in New York City in 1966, and they did a very nice piece of investigative work. They took the film strip which is composed, as you know, of individual frames, and they took each frame and blew it up into about an eleven by fifteen (11X15) size photograph. In the meantime they tested the Bell Howell camera. The FBI people tested it too. And they found that the film strip moved through the camera at 18.3 frames per second. So now then, if you take each frame, you are looking at one-eighteenth second in time. You can study the shooting of Kennedy and the wounding of Connally at one-eighteenth second intervals. Isn't that fascinating? That's what you can do with this Zapruder film. So they had them laid out in a room that was almost as big as this on view boxes, like x-ray viewboxes, all flat, and then you just went around in sequence. So you look at eighteen pictures and you travelled one second a time, and the next eighteen pictures and you view second two and so on. Well, in the meantime they'd also had the alleged murder weapon. This is a Mannlicher-Carcano, a bolt action automatic carbine, developed in Italy, going into World War II, which anybody will tell you is the biggest standing joke among long guns in the world. I received all kinds of letters and comments from NRA champions and people who know long guns. And in western Pennsylvania you know how many hundreds there are. Invariably there will be somebody around that will tell me—when I was in Rome at a medical/legal seminar I remember the first time in 1965 and I was talking there with Vesu' Zurin and his colleagues, Soviel Marley and Calabrese, and we were talking about the J.F.K. assassination, they began to smile when I was talking about the gun, I said, what are you laughing about? And they said, in Italy we have a joke about the Mannlicher-Carcano. It's not intended to be an instrument of war—it's a— or a weapon of war, it's an instrument of love. The Italians will tell you that World War II didn't go so well for them because of the Mannlicher-Carcano. Now that may be a little bit of hyperbole, but suffices to say that the weapon stinks.

Okay. Now this was the alleged murder weapon. They test fired it, and they got the best—the best marksman that they could find, and they shot in an open field from a platform. Well forgetting about accuracy, forgetting about shooting at a moving target, it took 2.3 seconds from shot to shot. You shoot, you handle the bolt action mechanism, and then you shoot again, 2.3 seconds. And nobody was really able to duplicate the feat of accuracy which was attributed to Lee Harvey Oswald, who, by the way, had flunked his first marksmanship test in the U.S. Marines, and who had a barely passing score the second time around. Well, but nevertheless, perhaps it could have been done. Now they took the test firing of the Mannlicher-Carcano and they correlated it with the Zapruder film looking at when Kennedy was hit and then when Connally was hit and then when Kennedy was hit, and there was no way. It just didn't go. It couldn't fit! Well now, the sweat is pouring down. Lee Harvey Oswald is long dead, the conclusions are in, there is no question at all, there can be no question, no equivocation, hesitation about this at all. The American public must know that it was a sole assassin. They can be—they can cry and be bereaved over the death of John F. Kennedy, but

them to repeat the experiment. They never will. They never have. The experiment was repeated. Mr. John Nichols, a pathologist, University of Kansas School of Medicine, did this experiment somewhat surreptitiously with cadavers, but John's now dead, and it's pretty well known, and I'm not telling stories out of school. John did the experiment. And his bullets which I saw in the pictures and everything were exactly what these show. Now please in mind, this is their picture. Here is 399. This bullet, the hero of their scenario broke the rib and the radius. Now here's the bone that broke the rib of a goat, and here's some bones that broke radii. You like that picture? When I asked my colleagues, how do they explain all of this and so on, well, on the forensic pathology panel of the House Committee on assassination, as I was getting ready to testify before the Congress, well, bullets do strange things. I'd like to see a pathologist—a forensic pathologist give that answer on the witness stand someday, when a defense attorney is asking him to explain something about a bullet, I'd like to see that answer be given. I've never heard it given one single time. Bullets do strange things. Next please.

Now, here's another close-up. Look. Cotton wadding only. Goat rib only. Human cadaver radius only. And here's Commission Exhibit 399, the stretcher bullet that broke a rib in a wrist, which lost less than one percent of its total weight, and which emerged without any deformity whatsoever, except this is the base from the firing mechanism. That's the single bullet theory. Right down the tube. Next please. And the trajectory—the trajectory. I've shown you several films and slides—several slides from films. This is yet another one. It's not important for you to know the name. This is another one, taken from another angle. Again, please note the positions. I realize this is not three-dimensional, please note, there's Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy, Connally, Mrs. Connally, note where he is in relationship to the President. You don't see him over here to the left. You're going to see why I keep stressing that so much. Next slide please. Here it is again. Note the President, and note John Connally. Next please. Now, here, contrary to the Warren Commission, I think all of you in this business of medical/legal investigation that you're engaged in, and even those of you who just occasionally drew lines in school in art class or whatever, you know about straight lines. And you know that bullets travelling 2100 feet per second, travel in straight lines. And you know, unless they are deflected or deviated by something substantial, they don't alter their course. The speed slows a little. If you line this up, and you shoot from the Texas Schoolbook Depository window, and you take this bullet moving from behind to the front, from right to left, and from up, downward, this is where the bullet goes. It misses John Connally completely.

You know where John Connally was struck, leaving the world of fantasy within the pages of the Warren Commission report, John Connally was struck in what we call medically, the right posterior axillary area, which means, simply, behind the right armpit on the back. So what you have, under the single bullet theory, is a bullet moving from back to front, from right to left, from up, downward, coming out of Kennedy's neck, hasn't struck bone, hasn't struck cartilage, entered at 2100 feet per second, down now to what, maybe 1950, 1900, that's not important. It's coming out, and as it continues to move downward and leftward and forward, it stops in mid air and

makes an acute turn, it comes back eighteen inches, stops a second time, hits John Connally behind the right armpit, and now proceeds downward at a forty-five degree angle of declination through his chest, through his wrist, and then somehow into his left thigh. That is the single bullet theory, without which you cannot have a sole assassin. I think there's one more slide. These are the twenty-six volumes of the Warren Commission. I just point them out to you because some of you, your spouses, are active in your communities and some of you are on schools and library committees, please, just as a matter of protocol and propriety when you go back to those committees and to those schools, make sure that they have these twenty-six volumes. If they are, take them from the non-fiction shelves and put them down with Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and Gulliver's Travels. Jim, I think that's the last slide, right? Jim, thank you very much. You're wasting your time in toxicology. That was a magnificent job. Thanks. Turn on the lights please.

Well, let me just tell you very quickly a few things I believe you'll find fascinating. Oswald had been in the United States Marines. He was stationed at Subee Air Base in Japan. This was a base, top CIA base, espionage activities in the Orient, and so on. Francis Gary Powers took off from there and the U-2 plane was shot down over Russia. He told the Marines that he had to get out, he had a hardship situation involving his mother, that she was critically ill. And in two weeks he got cleared with a hardship discharge from the United States Marines. The critical illness of his mother consisted of an abrasion of the crown of the nose which she had sustained at work when she was struck by some object and she missed a half a day at work. That was the hardship discharge. Now many of you have been in the military. I spent two years. I remember doing a few favors or trying to with some people. One did involve me very much personally. I can tell you, from a domestic situation involving a very unimportant individual, it took one hell of a lot of action to United States Congressmen and beyond there to try and get that person out on a discharge. A single child—an only child of a mother who was somewhat ill, and so. Anyway he gets out, he goes back to Texas, very close to his mother, and in less than forty-eight hours, he leaves. Doesn't say a word to her where he's going. He has no money. You know what one stripe is for getting in the military in those days. It was a joke. He flies commercial to New York and finally to Finland and then from Finland, Helsinki, and to Leningrad. By the way, when one of the critics checked the flight schedule for that time, the official schedule, there was no commercial flight flying from Helsinki to Leningrad. When this was brought to the attention of the Government, which they never bothered to check it out, their answer was, well, you know, schedules sometimes aren't printed properly. That's the way the Government handled the whole thing. For twenty-five years, anything that doesn't fit is either ignored or stonewalled or an attempt is made to in some way repudiate, reject, embarrass, attack in an unharmed fashion, whoever that critic might be that has had the audacity to raise a particular point. So he's over there for a couple of years. He tries to join the communist party, supposedly he's rebuffed. He marries Marina, who is the niece of a high ranking Colonel in the KGB-----

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OSCA UPDATE

however, very important to know that that period of time behind the Stimmons Freeway sign is less than a second, ninetieths of a second, to be precise. So here they are on the Zapruder film going in behind the Stimmons Freeway sign. Next please. Here's the sign itself, and for that brief moment, they are out of sight. Next please. Now here they are coming out of the sign. This is Frame 223. John Connally is unhurt. You'll see Kennedy in a moment. And by the way, John Connally has repeatedly stated, beginning with the first news conference held in the hospital where he was a patient, when he was in good enough condition to talk, the surgery went well, he said, then, he said a thousand times on and off the record since then, as has his wife, there's no question—no doubt in his mind, he heard the shot, he heard the President being struck, Jackie Kennedy's exclamation, and he began to turn to ask what—to see and to ask, Mrs. Connally looked and turned, he had not been shot, and then he turned back again. Next please. Here now you see Kennedy coming out from behind the sign, his hands going up toward his mouth and throat, and here's John Connally seated in front of Frame 225. Remember, 223 to 225 we just went two-eightieths or one-ninth of a second traversed in time. Next please.

Now, look at this frame very very carefully. This is Z-230, Zapruder Frame 230. The President, you can see, he's been shot, Mrs. Kennedy—I want you to concentrate on John Connally. I want you to look at him, look at his face. That's his Texas stetson hat, big white hat he's holding. I want you to see that hand clutching it. Under the single bullet theory of the Warren Commission, under their theory, one and a half seconds have elapsed, and this man, John Connally, has been shot through the chest, the lung's been perforated, the right fifth rib has been pulverized anteriorly, the right wrist has been perforated, the radius has been shattered, the radial nerve has been almost completely severed, the bullet's gone into his side, one and a half seconds have elapsed, and there he sits. That's a hell of a man, aren't you sorry you didn't have him for President, Huh?—Huh? A guy like that would know how to deal with the Russians, wouldn't he? Next slide please. Here's a close-up of it, fuzzy, but closer to you. Here is Connally, and here's that same frame, 230. I also want you to see the relationship. One of the continuing tricks, when you had a defender of the Warren Commission report here, and I was long gone, if you tell somebody that—who says, if you talk about the trajectory which we'll get into later on, one of the things he's going to say to you is, well we don't know how they were seated really at all times. I pointed out before to you, and I want you to see now, please note where John Connally is seated in relationship to John Kennedy. This is extremely important in terms of the trajectory. Note, that he is not over there to his left, that he is down in tandem from John Kennedy. Next please. This is the head shot, 313 Zapruder film. His head literally explodes. A horrible thing, you can see, especially on the moving film. Next please. Here's the sketch. I'd like to believe that most of you as Coroners, if you got this kind of a sketch from a pathologist, would probably boot his rear end out of the office, so this is on the President of the United States. Can you read this? Can you see these hieroglyphics and markings, and so on? They didn't have enough paper. They—anyway, please note, look, here's the hole that they sketched in, right here, seven by four (7X4) millimeters. That's the hole from which

they said first that the bullet had emerged. This was just an old scar from a back injury. And then these were—these were tubes and this was the tracheostomy as far as they were concerned. Notice how they drew it, elliptical in shape. Here was the hole in the head that they said was the entrance. And notice where they put it. It was exactly four inches down below the level of the top of the head. Next please.

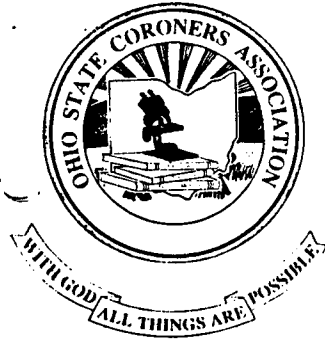
Here's another sketch directly from their materials. Please note the hole where they drew it, right there, and look down here. All right, next please. Now here's a shot of Connally's wrist. Comminuted fracture. Please note the fragments of metal. Next please. These are fragments removed from Connally's wrist. This bullet, 6.5 millimeter copper jacketed lead core military type ammunition measuring one and a quarter inch in length, and a quarter of an inch in diameter, this bullet weighs 162.5 grains and in restored mint condition, 162 grains. The bullet that was found on the stretcher weighed 159.8 grains. So we're told that that bullet which had left fragments this size in Connally's wrist, other pieces of metal in Kennedy's chest, Connally's chest, and Connally's thigh, that all of those pieces of metal together weighed less than one percent of the total weight of the bullet. Next please. Here's a picture of Connally's femur, and there's a piece of metal there. Next please. Now, let's look at the magic bullet. This is it. These markings that you see here were made quite properly by the FBI that took small—who took small pieces for spectrographic analysis. So that's smooth. These are artifacts properly made and recorded. That's not a problem. I want you to look at this bullet. This is it. This is the bullet, according to the Warren Commission, which went through both men and broke two bones. Next. Here is its nose. Here is its cone. This is the part that struck the bullets. No deformity of any kind, none. Next. The only deformity on this bullet is at its base, a slight indentation from the firing mechanism. Next.

One of my favorite slides put together by them, the government, and here it is. Now, there were some people with some intelligence involved with the Warren Commission. I said, Hey, could a bullet do all these things? Maybe we ought to test it and see. So they set up an experiment at Edgewood Army Arsenal in Maryland in the early spring of 1964. And they did three things. They got cotton wadding and they fired a Mannlicher-Carcano with 6.5 millimeter ammunition, and they got out those bullets from the cotton wadding. Then they got goat carcasses and they set them up in such a way as to break one rib in a goat to simulate the fracture of Connally's rib. And they got those bullets. There were many in each category. And then they got human cadavers, and they set them up to shoot through the radius of the human cadaver to simulate the fracture of Connally's wrist, and they got those bullets. Okay. They, not I, not any other critic, they, the government made this composite photo. These two bullets were fired in the cotton wadding. That's all, cotton wadding. Look at their bases. This bullet broke one rib of a goat. And by the way, it's the same ammunition. It looks bigger. It looks different. That's because it's somewhat flattened and distorted. That's the bullet that broke—these two broke bones of human cadavers. I want you to look and see what happened to them. To this day, twenty-five years later, I have done everything, in writing and verbally, I have used everything from—from pleas with tears to sarcasm and everything else conceivable to try to get

they must understand that it was a sole assassin, that there was no conspiracy. That's essential to the entire scenario at all times. Well, what are you going to do with this tremendous problem, this physical incongruity? And that's when the infamous single bullet theory was born. And I always want to give credit for it's creation to it's author. Now, regrettably, U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, then a member of the staff. The single bullet theory holds as follows: Designed to get over the problems presented by the test firing of the weapon and the Zapruder film timing. A bullet hit Kennedy in the back at a now upward revised location, by the way, because when they had the hole in the front of the neck the next day as an exit wound, with Oswald shooting from up there, and a hole six inches down, they had a hell of a problem, right? How do you get the bullet coming six inches below the shoulder and then making a sharp upward U turn to exit the neck here? So they simply moved it up. When they gave their testimony in March, 1964 before the Warren Commission they said, and I'll show you, in a little bit I'll show you the sketch. They said that the sketch made by them on the night of the autopsy with the President's unclad body on the table in front of them, was not meant to really be drawn to scale or anything like it. It's just a rough sketch. And they didn't really mean for it to be down six inches below the shoulder. It was really just up over the crest of the shoulder so that they could get themselves a slight downward angle from the front of the neck. The Warren Commission never challenged them on that. It was all a sweetheart arrangement, in and out, let's get it done with. Well, that bullet now, entering at the revised upward location on the back, they said, coursed through the President's neck, exited from the front of his neck, re-entered John Connally's back, pierced the right lung collapsing it, went through the right fifth rib, destroyed four inches of that bone, exited from the front his right chest, re-entered the back of John Connally's right wrist, caused a comminuted fracture to the distal end of the radius (remember John Connally was six foot, four (6'4")), and all the doctors in the room know that the radius gets damn big and broad down toward the wrist, especially a guy that size) partially severed—almost completely severed the radial nerve, exited from the front of Governor John Connally's right wrist, re-entered John Connally's left thigh, went down, struck the femur, came back out through the same hole through several inches of fat, muscle, fascia, and skin, came into John Connally's clothing, and the bullet found on the stretcher parked in the hospital back on the day of the autopsy, and the assassination was now the bullet through John Connally's left thigh. And that's why the critics call this the "magic bullet theory". It is the most wonderful missile that has ever been portrayed in America. Your comic books from your days as kids never had bullets that did these kinds of things. And moreover, it does then whatever you want it to do. On Friday night of the autopsy it was from the back. The next day, Saturday, it was from the front. Six months later it was from John Connally's left thigh. Wherever you need it to be from, it happily obliges you. Now we didn't look at that bullet. And we're going to talk a little bit about it in a short time. Well, that was the ultimate conclusion. You must understand something. The single bullet theory is the sine qua non of Warren Commission reports conclusions, vis-a-vis the sole assassin. It's not a matter of, well, I like that evidence, I think some other evidence

might have been better, I like his opinion, I like that opinion, Uh-huh (No). This is not one of those things. This is not a hurry-up discussion today from one of your colleagues. This is not preponderance of evidence. This is not possibility, probability, reasonable medical certainty. Its not that sort of nonsense. You either have a single bullet theory which enables you to have a sole assassin, Oswald or someone else. You either have it, or if you don't have it, you can't have a sole assassin. And that's it. Nobody who knows anything about this case argues that. The single bullet theory means forgetting everything else. And there is a tremendous—tremendous amount, but not getting to that from a physical evidentiary forensic scientific ballistic standpoint, if you have a single bullet theory, you can argue that it might have been possible. But if you don't have a single bullet theory, then nothing else really is necessary to shoot down the Warren Commission report. Let's look at the slides. I think this would be a good point then to get into the slides to show you some of the things that you'll find relevant and which will give you a better understanding. Should we dim the lights, please? If we can. I don't know if anybody knows where they are. Does anybody know where the lights are for this room? (Audience response): "by the door". I apologize, many of my slides are mounted on a thick plastic frame, and therefore we were not able to load them into the carousel. The fellows are going to try to hand load them, so it may be just a little bit slower. Could you just focus that a little please. Yes. Okay. That's fine to me. All right. I'm sorry about the ones... Pardon me? (Audience comment): "Higher". (Response): "Higher? Can you—can you—are you able to get that high"? (Audience talking): (Can't make out everything). Um, can you see—let's see, the lectern may be in the way. (Audience response): "No, I'm okay. I can see through. I can see it through... Ha-Ha-Ha".

The dotted white line represents the route of the motorcade, beginning on your right side, that's coming down Main Street, turning right on Houston and then left on Elm. And you see, on the top of the slide, a little bit to the right of the mid portion, is the Texas Schoolbook Depository building. And you see down toward the left in about the center, you see the grassy knoll area, extremely important. So that's the—oh, all right, thank you. Does this come out? (Response): "That's about as far as it goes". Oh, oh, oh, that—that's limit. Okay. Well, all right. I believe everybody can see that who can see the slide. Next please. This is the Texas Schoolbook Depository building, and the window at the far right below the top level is the southeast corner window from which it is alleged that Oswald shot. Next slide please. Oswald, by the way, worked there in the Schoolbook Depository, and was seen there calmly drinking a Coke, a matter of seconds on the second floor afterwards by a Dallas police officer who pulled out his gun and challenged him. The foreman of the building identified Oswald. Oswald never said a word, and then just left with all the other employees who were dismissed for the day. This is a frame from the Zapruder film. Now it'll take you a moment to get adjusted here. But let me just point out to you that, that is John Kennedy with his hand waving, and here is John Connally with his hand waving, and their wives are to their respective lefts. This is the Stimmons Freeway sign which unfortunately has produced a lot of problems in the retrospective analysis, Abraham Zapruder had his vision momentarily blocked. It is,



OHIO STATE CORONERS ASSOCIATION

UPDATE

September 1988

520 King Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43201 • 614/462-5290

**FINAL
EPISODE**

FORENSIC REVIEW OF JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

Cyril Wecht, M.D., J.D.

He marries Marina, niece of KGB Colonel, and despite that, and despite his open verbal renunciation of his United States citizenship and of his American nationality, despite all that, a matter of record, he decides a couple of years later, with his new Russian bride, the neice, of a KGB Colonel, America's not such a bad place afterall, I think I'd like to go home. He goes to the American Embassy, he has no money, no passport now that is legitimate, and over a week, and he's cleared to come back to the United States with his Russian bride. You want to try that sometime? I'll give you the same opportunity that I've been giving audiences for twenty-five years. You just pick another country. Forget Russia. Try

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LEGAL CORONER

William E. Kose, M.D., J.D.

Coroner's Records

According to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 313.09, the coroner shall keep a complete record of and shall fill in the cause of death on the death certificate, in all cases coming under his jurisdiction. All records are to be kept in the coroner's office or in the office of the clerk of court of common pleas. Those records must be properly indexed, shall state the deceased person's name, the place where the body was found, the date of death, cause of death, and all other available information. The coroner is to deliver promptly to the prosecuting attorney copies of all records relating to every death in which further investigation is advisable. The county sheriff, city police, township constable, or village marshall may be requested to furnish more information or make further

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KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS

Paul Corey
Legislative Consultant

When the air clears and the dust settles, the survivors of this election year will no doubt heave a hearty sigh of relief, but this is by no means the time to let down your legislative efforts! While the state legislature is not expected to reconvene until after the November elections, we can't sit idle. NOW is the time to GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS!

Many candidates, both incumbent and hopefuls, are hitting the campaign trail hard. It is important to know the people who will be making the laws affecting your life and profession.

The following are helpful hints which may prove useful in the process:

1. Become acquainted with YOUR State Legislators (e.g., stop at their local office, invite them to visit your faculty, phone for an early appointment, etc.). Remember, this is an election year and the candidates

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Rakers Ramblings:

SIDS in Licking County

See page 3

England, where they speak your language, or come pretty close to it. Walk into the American Embassy, tell them that you have no passport, no papers, you picked up a New York bride, you've got no money, but tell them that over the weekend you'd just like to get this straightened out so you can get the hell home. Okay. And if you can get that straightened out in a weekend, let me know, and you'll be my guest in New York for two weeks. All right. But Oswald came back. He got a job finally—eventually at the Texas Schoolbook, but before that, he was travelling to Mexico City, like you might go to Cleveland, or Pittsburgh, or fly to New York, in and out, nobody knew why. One day in New Orleans, by the way, he got involved in a scuffle with a—somebody described as a swarthy looking Cuban type person. He was passing out fair play for Cuba literature.

Oswald was arrested and taken to the police station, and documented. The first thing he said was what everybody is taught to say, right? You tell your teenage sons, if they're ever picked up by the police, the first thing they should say is, call the FBI—call the FBI. In his little black book on his person the day of his arrest was the unlisted address and phone number of the number to a FBI agent in Dallas, James Hostig. Oswald was arrested that afternoon, when he left the Schoolbook building, by the way, all this is documented, he came out, there was a wild melee as you can imagine, and he called for a cab, the cab pulled over, and as he was about to get in, an older woman came by and she said, oh, I called that—I motioned to that cab first. Oswald, who was now fleeing from the scene of the assassination, he said, that's okay, ma'm, you go ahead and take the cab, and then he starts to walk, and he gets on a bus, he goes home, and he just takes off his jacket, takes another jacket, and he's walking down the street. And at 1:17 that afternoon, there was another shooting. J.D. Tippett, a Dallas police officer, who was stationed in the far end of town, who had not been ordered to go anywhere else, who is now there. And, he's driving in 1:17. Where he's going, nobody knows. Well, under the good cop theory, we'll bend over backwards to accommodate the defenders and apologists for the Warren Commission report, and we'll say, well, he was just a good cop, and he was rushing to the scene. So he's rushing, and you know how fast a cop can rush just if he's in a hurry to go home for lunch or somewhere, you can imagine how fast he must have been going, right? If he looks out his window, it's 1:17, here's Oswald, he's 5'9", 160 pounds, he had light brown hair, a little jacket, he was walking down the street at 1:17, this cop looks out the window and says, "I'll be damn, that's the guy that shot the President!" He stops and Tippett is shot. Some of my critic friends think that Oswald didn't do that shooting either. I disagree with them. I think Oswald did do that shooting. Oswald knew what was happening at that point when the cop pulled over and said, hey you, or whatever the cop said, I wasn't there. Nobody knows exactly what the cop said. At that point, Oswald, who had been involved in some way in this whole business, I'm sure, began to have some damn good feelings, some vibes about what was happening. Anyway, he was arrested a few minutes later.

From Friday mid afternoon for the rest of the day and all of Saturday and Sunday morning, interrogated by the FBI, the Secret Service, the District Attorney, Dallas detectives and

police, in a city which has had some homicides, Dallas, one of the major murder capitals of the country, with a great degree of sophistication, and back in those days, one hell of a lot of money. Are you ready for this? All Friday afternoon, all Saturday, Sunday morning, nobody used the recording machine. Nobody used a pencil, pen, or paper. Nobody wrote down one word—one word! of a question or an answer in interrogation that went from Friday afternoon to Sunday late morning. Can you believe that? And then Oswald's being let out between two non-uniformed detectives, enter Jack Ruby. Jack Ruby is the guy—Damon Runyun, in his best day on LSD, could not have created Jack Ruby. Jack Ruby started off with the mafia in Chicago. At the age of seventeen was already involved as an accessory in a murder charge, went down to Dallas. He was, at various times, and sometimes at the same time, as far as anybody knew, he was a restaurateur, a bar owner, a pimp, a gun runner, a police informant, an FBI informant. A couple of weeks before all this he had been on a plane smuggling guns into Cuba. He was tied in with the mafia. He was everything. This is the Jack Ruby who, on the afternoon of the shooting, when everybody was at Parkland Hospital—(was at Parkland Hospital!) seen by no less a reliable person than an internationally renowned journalist, Seth Canter, who had just interviewed Ruby some weeks before, who are one of those personality type stories, Seth Canter saw him there and said, Jack, what are you doing here? Jack Ruby was at the hospital. That Friday night, Jack Ruby was at the police station. He said, because he was concerned that some of his policemen friends might be hungry, and he wanted to see if he could bring them sandwiches. And that's the Jack Ruby, who on Sunday morning, happened to find himself outside the ramp of the Dallas Public Safety Building, having just wired money by Western Union to a one time stripper of his who needed some money. He walked down, nobody said a word. Texas rangers, Dallas policemen, detectives, FBI, Secret Service. It was just a nice pleasant exciting Sunday morning. Too bad you and I weren't there. We could have been present at the scene too. Nobody would have challenged us. He walked right in, he said. And he decided then that he would do something to make Jackie Kennedy feel better, and he stepped forward, and he shot Oswald. And then while he lived in a guinea pig like existence, with twenty-four hour surveillance, we add a new element, a new dimension to our little drama. We even have the touch of medical malpractice, he developed a cold, and soon that cold was an inoperable cancer of the lung. Good bye Jack Ruby.

Suffice it to say, the Warren Commission Report is sheer nonsense. Not one of those people will ever participate in any kind of a discussion, debate, or talk show program, with any of the knowledgeable experienced critics. There are many excellent books that you can read. The most recent one was Reasonable Doubt by Henry Hart. Another excellent book, Conspiracy by Anthony Summers. Two of the early books that still remain classics on this, Sylvia Marr, Accessory To After The Fact, Josiah Thompson, Six Seconds In Dallas, Mark Lane's first book, Reasonable Doubt. No, that wasn't the name of his first book. His first book was Rush To Judgment. I'm sorry, Rush To Judgment. There are many things that one can read. This was the murder of the President. This was the overthrow of the government, in essence, this was a coup

d'état in America, but that's what it was. It was the killing of Kennedy to remove him from the presidency. And it doesn't make any difference, you see, what your politics are, and what you may have thought then or today about John Kennedy, that's not the point. The point is that, that kind of thing can happen in America, and it can be covered up, like this has been, with no reason to expect that it could not happen again. And that's why this is important. It's a fascinating murder mystery all by itself, but when you view it in its proper perspective and remember what it was all about and who was involved, then you can understand why it's so very very important that this matter not be permitted to die. And after the programs this... all, based upon what I've been told by very responsible top level professionals, there's going to be some new and interesting and exciting stuff. Whether it'll be a breakthrough or not, I don't know. I stopped allowing myself to be very optimistic about this, because I'd come to recognize the power of the government in just doing nothing. Even though the House Select Committee, on assassinations, for example, chaired by a Congressman from your state, Congressman Stokes, even though that Committee concluded on paper that with a high degree of certainty—with a high degree of certainty, there were two shooters from two different locations and four bullets fired, not one shooter and three bullets, like the Warren Commission says, even though a congressional committee, specifically appointed for this purpose, concluded that, nothing since then, now almost a decade, has been done. Not by the executive branch of government, not by the legislative branch of government, by nobody. Because if you just wait long enough, then people forget, and people die, and a lot of people did die, some very very strange deaths back then, and this isn't National Enquirer nonsense, this is real stuff.

Some deaths that you couldn't believe how they happened and how they were signed out. One local Coroner in Texas signed out a guy who supposedly walked through a plate glass window and had his carotid and jugular severed, signed him out as a suicide. And another reporter was shot by a policeman accidentally, cleaning his gun. And a couple of people went off the road on clear days, driving their cars, with no alcohol in them at all, and they just veered into culverts and so on. And Dorothy Killgallen, who had done extensive interviewing of Jack Ruby, had told her colleagues, this is all documented, told her colleagues in New York that she just had fantastic stuff that was going to break this thing wide open. She wound up dead one day. And a guy who we'd never heard of, but who was a key person for all the critics, by the name of George DeMarnshield, a former white Russian, who got out of Russia after World War I, he was a Secret Service employee of at least three countries that we know of, and he moved back and forth with some other Dallas multi-millionaire oil men, and so on. And he befriended Lee and Marina. He read an article in the paper one day, and he felt sorry for this Russian girl and her American husband. And they became his special project. George DeMarnshield, then, was on his way, some years later, having been summoned to testify before a congressional committee, and while visiting with a daughter in Florida, and all of a sudden decided to commit suicide. And then, we've got a lot of other things, like Sam Giancana, a mafia boss in Chicago, and Johnny Rozelli, underling boss. Sam Giancana being murdered in his apartment in Chicago, and Johnny Rozelli

being found off the coast of Miami with some cement tied to his ankles, both having been involved with Kennedy. Sam Giancana was Judith Exner's other lover. And Judith Exner, she slept with the President one night, and then she slept with Sam Giancana the next night. That's all documented too. This is incredible. You can't believe this. You won't believe it, except that, it's real. And it's all there. And one can only hope that something will yet be done, there are things that can be done. They can repeat that shooting experiment.

Oh, I forgot to tell you, because this is very important for you people in your field. When I went to the National Archives in August, 1972, I told Dr. Eicher, I knew you'd get a kick out of this, they—they were concerned about other people examining these materials. Someone would come up with the brilliant idea that they would say that all the autopsy materials belong to Mrs. Kennedy. The gun, the bullet, the bullet fragments, the clothing, the records, the documents, they were all her personal property. So in April, 1965, Admiral George Berkley, the White House physician, had sent everything over to the National Archives. Included among those things was a metal case containing the brain. Plus Kodachromes of the interior of the President's chest wounds, plus microscopic autopsy tissue slides from the entrance and exit wounds that, you know, we would study microscopically to look for characteristics of entrance and exit wounds. Well, they were documented, a memorandum of transfer in April, 1965. One and a half years later, when it was determined that all of these things belonged to Mrs. Kennedy, they now did an inventory, because they were accepting these, formally and officially, from her, as a gift, at the National Archives, with the stipulation that nobody could see these things for seventy-five years. With the exception that, after five years, quote, "recognized experts in the field of pathology with a serious historical purpose", could petition to see the materials. So, when I went in, then, in August, 1972, after being rebuffed and maneuvered around, that's another story, but I won't bore you with the details. I finally got in when a New York Times reporter, Fred Graham, began to make inquiry as to why I wasn't being given permission. I finally got in, and I learned, that, which the government people knew, but it was then a major part, a Fred Graham story on the front page of the New York Times on August 22, 1972, that the brain was missing. The Kodachromes and the slides were missing. In that year and a half, from April, 1965 to October 30, 1966, somebody took the brain, took the Kodachromes, and took the slides out of there. And on the inventory done on October 30, 1966, they were no longer listed. And to this day—to this day, nobody will do anything about it. Talk about government, all the inquiries that can possibly be made by private citizens have been made. But the government has not pursued this. Getting back, then, to what could be done to find the brain, all the bullet fragments should be studied, neutron activation analysis. The shooting experiment should be performed again. Let's see, if ever—if ever, anybody could get ahold of that bullet fired from a gun of its genre, if anybody could ever get a bullet to emerge, unscathed because there are things that can be done. As I've already said, many of the principle people are dead, but there are still enough people around that would permit one to re-open this investigation and to handle it as it should have been handled from the beginning, as a murder investigation. Thank you. (Applause).

Question? (Audience question): "I was just going to ask, Dr. Wecht, how much of his brain was left? Was it mostly gone? (Dr. Wecht's response): No. I have seen the pictures of the brain at the National Archives. That's another point that I forgot to mention. The answer is, No. Most of the brain is there. The left cerebral hemisphere appears on a few pictures that were taken to be essentially in tact. The brain was placed in formalin, for those of you who are not doctors, not Coroners, may be unaware that, brain—brains removed at autopsy have a quite soft consistency, probably softer than most non-doctors realize. And especially a brain that's been traumatized by a bullet. So if you attempt to cut it then, if it's important for you to really know the trajectory, the angle, and so on, you fix it in formalin for about two weeks. Some people, less, some people, two weeks, as the average time. They did this quite properly in the Kennedy case. They fixed the brain in formalin. And on December 6th, two weeks later, they went back. And this is the addendum to the autopsy report. Serial sections of the brain are not made in order to preserve the specimen. So the brain was never examined, as far as we know. And then the question of whether a second shot coming from the right side in front of the grassy knoll, fired in synchronized fashion, striking the head, that question, you see, can never be fully and properly answered. So, no, the brain was there. And they finessed that too. And where it is, nobody knows. Obviously, if the body had been buried, then there was no reason in the world that that brain should not have been examined. It was necessary to examine it. But, the point that I—I've—well, I've inferred, I haven't tried to stay away from it, I didn't know if I—if I stated it firmly enough, well I think I tried to, and that is, that, you must understand that, once Oswald was killed, in the late morning on Sunday, November 24th, that was the end of the investigation for all intents and purposes, as far as the government was concerned.

They never, I'm sure, in their wildest imagination, ever believed that private citizens, critics, and I don't care what their motivations are, to hear, well, he—he's just an assassination buff, and she wanted to write a book, and he wants to go on a lecture tour, now what the hell difference does that make? Who cares, what the motivations are? You want to be a Coroner because you like to see your name in the paper. Who cares? If you're doing a good job, and you're a good Coroner, and if that's—that's your reason, then wh—what has that got to do with anything? But in any event, they never thought for a moment that all of this would be unearthed, that all of this would be brought out. What would we talk about today? This isn't from the government. This is all from private people, who were on their own. Some of them spent a lot of money. Some of them spent thousands and thousands of hours to help unearth this. But once Oswald was dead, and then Ruby was dead, and so on, then they just sat back. And that's why they stonewalled the whole thing. You should know, for what it's worth, that, every public opinion poll that has been taken, and I'm talking about the biggies, CBS, New York Times, others, I'm not talking about something that—that I or some critic has—has commissioned. Every national survey taken since the time of the assassination has shown that eighty percent plus (80%+), in fact, it's grown to eighty-five percent (85%), of the American public rejects the basic conclusions of the Warren Commission Report, i.e., that Kennedy was killed by Oswald, who

acted alone from beginning to end, and no accomplice of any kind, and that there was no conspiracy of any nature. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the American public rejects that. And that's fascinating. Despite the best efforts of the United States government and all of their repeated subsequent attempts to whitewash and cover up the Rockefeller Commission, the House Select committee on Assassinations despite all of that, they had failed. I realize, that's not scientific evidence. But, there aren't too many situations that you could think of, where, despite everything that has happened, and despite the absence of an opportunity to expose all this in a court of law, an adversarial proceeding, that, five-sixths of the American public would turn it's thumbs down on the official government version. If anybody has any questions, I will be happy to answer. I don't want to keep you. I know it's—it's late, but, go ahead.

(Audience question): Now we are in a Presidential election year with candidates passing through our jurisdiction, how would you advise handling such a situation, should it happen today if it were in your jurisdiction? What would—how would you, that's a tough question, how would you maintain...?" (Response): "I got that very phone call about two or three o'clock in the morning, Pittsburgh time, on June 7th, from my good friend and colleague, Dr. Tom Noguchi, in Los Angeles, and I thought I said, "Tom, what the hell are you doing calling me now?" With a three hour time difference than in Los Angeles. "Don't you know what time it is?" I was leaving in the morning with my three boys for a travellers convention I'd been invited to speak in Puerto Rico. We were going to stop to see their grandmother in Baltimore. My wife was in the hospital, just giving birth to our daughter. So I was at—and—Tom said, "Senator Kennedy has been shot". He said he wanted to talk about what to do. I made a few suggestions, and then Tom was able to follow through. I said, "Tom, what's very important," He had not yet pronounced dead, but Tom told me that he soon would be, "Tom, it's very important. You need a liaison with that Kennedy family right away. So they don't run into that same kind of a situation, you know, the politics, and the personalities, the very close family situation, and—and I don't say this disparagingly, you've all encountered it, it's strong, you know, Ca—feeling among many Catholics that you can't have an autopsy, you know, we encounter some religious, some of the Orthodox Jews, and so on, which—which I do not believe is theologically correct, but—but, many—but some Catholics believe it. It's a whole combination. So, you need the right person as a liaison." I said I'll tell you who the right guy is, Tom, Pierre Salinger. He's the closest person to the Kennedys. He's a Californian. He's an attorney. He's Catholic. He's bright. Get in touch with him. And tell him—explain to him that you're going to have to do this autopsy. And he did that. And Salinger was a good liaison. For the second thing, you get in touch with every damn doctor that was there in that operating room that laid hands on Bobby Kennedy, and you order them to be present at the autopsy table. No guessing. This incision, that hole, or so on, doctor, be there, what did you do? What was your incision? And so on. And they were there. Third thing: It involves Senator Kennedy, presidential candidate. Get in touch with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. You know the people there, Tom, our colleagues, and invite them—invite them to send out some

forensic pathologist to be there as your guest in the autopsy room. And they flew out, three of them. The fourth thing, then: Make sure that you get all the information and facts necessary from the police. Go to the scene before you do the autopsy, look everything over, and be prepared. And then, of course, in the autopsy room, no question about your competency, make sure that you've got all the people available, and so on. And all those things were done.

And if you've ever looked at the autopsy report on Robert F. Kennedy, it's a study, in fact, I ran these in my—in the Legal Medicine Annual, and I called it, The Study In Contrast. With just a little bit of introduction, I just put in the Robert F. Kennedy autopsy protocol by Tom Noguchi in his office, and then, the John F. Kennedy protocol, and, what can I tell you? It's like Gone With The Wind and a Mickey Mouse cartoon. That's what it's like. So these are, you know, kinds of things—some of the things I would do. I'm sure you could think of other things. I'm not, you know, obviously you've got to have the expertise, and—and I'm sure that—that you would have them in your office. But—But, those are the—the sort—sort of things that you want to think about when you're dealing with a celebrity, a prominent person. It can't be rushed, and you can't, I don't know if you've ever been involved while you're—you're all politicians, as—as I used to be, elected Coroners, and you know, so, some of you Democrats and Republicans, some of you, probably active in your parties, and so, what presidential candidates have been through, you—you've perhaps gone to their affairs, and you know, there is no group of people, and perhaps they've got to be, there's no group of people that I can think of that are more curt, rude, brusque, officious, arrogant, than Secret Service. I mean, you know, they—you—your grandmother, crippled with arthritis, would be pushed down into a sewer by them if that's what they felt they had to do. Now, that's a discussion but maybe they have to be. But, I mean, if you ever had that kind of a situation, and I don't speak from experience, but I did have the political experience of—of—of hosting an awful lot of presidential candidates, and the President, Jimmy Carter, as a Democrat, but—but If you ever had that situation, you could expect the worst. I mean, you probably could expect all kinds of threats, and so on. You just let it be known, that a murder is a murder, and it's going handled properly by your office. Yes.

(Audience question): "So, after twenty-five years, what do you think happened?" (Response): "What do I think happened? I think a maverick rogue element of the CIA in concert with Carlos Marcello, mafia, New Orleans family, some input from some others, I think they orchestrated this. I think only two or three or four people probably knew everything. Various other people were assigned little things to do, but they didn't know the whole scenario. I think Oswald was the best patsy that could have ever been created. His background in Russia, the whole thing, was just absolutely fantastic, tailor-made, position in the Texas Schoolbook building, and so on. That's what I think happened. I think that they just decided that, John Kennedy was not the man for them. In five more years, one year of his term, his re-election was a short pop. You saw what Lyndon Johnson did to Goldwater. You can imagine what John Kennedy would have done to anybody that ran against him in 1964. Again, I'm not talking about whether anybody liked Kennedy, that's beside the point. I'm just talking real

politics. So, you're looking at five more years of John Kennedy, and real politics. The political pundits, I guarantee you, then and now, if you ask them today, right wing or left wing, conservative or liberal, they'll all tell you the same thing, that there was a damn good chance that Robert Kennedy would succeed his brother. And, in fact, with his brother dead, and with his two most bitter enemies, Lyndon Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, whom he hated, and who hated him, Bobby Kennedy had the Democratic nomination in his hand following his election in California in 1968, with his brother's patronage gone for five years. So, these people were looking at thirteen more years of the Kennedy's. And that just brought the bile to the throat and there was just no way that was going to happen, not in their America—not in their America. Do you understand? That, people who, you know, for the—the best of reasons in their minds. They weren't doing it to destroy America, they were doing it to save America. You've seen that kind of attitude, haven't you? Twenty years ago? And more recently? There are people who know what's right for America. Forget what the laws and the constitution and other institutions say, we know what's right and what must be done to save our country from ourselves. That's what I believe happened with John Kennedy. And incidentally, that's what I believe happened with Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

(Audience question): "A conspiracy...?" (Response): "You just can't handle—you just can't have people like that who can reach out and get a hundred million Americans to follow their bidding. You just can't have that kind of person around. It just doesn't work". There are people who've been more liberal than the Kennedys. There are people that are more—more intense, perhaps, than, even maybe Martin Luther King. But, when you think about who had the charisma, who could reach huge masses, whose every word would immediately result in—in half of the country, if not more, being fervent adherents, then you realize what you're dealing with. It's a force that can't be handled in any other way, other than through the structure.

THE END

Thanks again Dr. Wecht, Ed

1989

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