

10 July 69

Harold:

I can't remember whether you mentioned this in Post Mortem, but I thought I would mention it anyway. It bears on the question whether the autopsy doctors knew about the JFK front-neck wound before Humes called Perry.

The Panel Report, p.9, says: " At the site of and above the traceotomy incision in the front of the neck, there can be identified the upper half of the circumference of a circular cutaneous wound the appearance of which is characteristic of that of the exit wound of a bullet. (The PR does not explain what features of this wound indicate it was an exit wound) The lower half of this circular wound is obscured by the surgically produced traceotomy incision which transects it."

The point is that if the ^{small circular} wound was visible to the camera (even from a side view), it must have been visible also to anyone who examined it closely. The Autopsy Report indicates such a close observation: "Situated in the low anterior neck at approximately the third or fourth trachial rings is a 6.5 cm. long traverse wound with widely gaping irregular edges."

It's clear from this that they looked at the wound well enough to estimate its location with reference to the trachial rings and to measure it within a half a centimeter. That's close as hell, and I don't see how they can possibly have failed to spot the small circular wound. The incision may have been "gaping" because a tracheal tube was inserted there, but the small circular wound can have been the only "irregularity" in the edges of the incision; for surgical cutlery are always as sharp as razors and always make clean cuts-- they are designed to make clean cuts.

Personally, I can't believe that they failed to note the small circular wound and to know its significance. This leads me to the assertion, of course, that the phone calls to Perry were nothing but a charade, a cover to explain why they did not subject the wound to close examination (what wound?, they would ask), and also to allow the projection of a path from rear to front.

The whole business of their failing to examine the front wound smelled like ~~fi~~ rotten fish from the beginning, for JFK was still lying in state and they could easily have gone to the body or even have called it back to the autopsy room.

Anyway, I think that you can make a good case for ~~indications~~ indications that Humes knew about the small circular wound before he called Perry. Perhaps you already have, but I don't recall.

Still,

Dick

Bernabei

cc Schoener