9/18/70

Dear Jim,

It is kind of you to take the time and trouble to help. I wrote you initially, more openly then I did Hal or Paul, fearing that if the possibility Paul was under compulsion proved warranted, caution was required. I think Hal has flagged interest in himself that may still exist. I went into this with him long ago, and I believe he finally concurred.

The time for ellipsis is now past. As you can see from the enclosed (please give or send to Hal after you've read), I'm fairly blunt and open with Paul. I agree with Hal on Paul's integrity and with you about his inclination toward bullheadedness. He insists, for example, on trusting those he knows are untrustworthy, explaining it to his own (apparent) satisfaction as the need of cooperation.

I just can't understand this at all. Paul is bright as can be, and that is a stupidity. It is subject to misuse only and cannot on any score qualify as scientific.

It is good that you did show Hal my letter, for without solace as his was, it was sufficient to tell me I have to discard my conjecture and take what preliminary steps may be required to counter this new horror. What an awful way to spend time, and how much I have to waste that way! If I hear nothing from Paul in a few more days, I'm writing to Physics World or Physcis Today. I now have their address. I shun and delay not to hurt Paul's reputation and to give him ample time. Not that more than two weeks isn't enough time!

Although you didn't read Hal's letter (and I agree opinions should be independent, hence I sent out no copies of what I sent Paul), you may say pretty much what he did.

You are completely correct in saying the melon is no duplicate of the head and in itself disqualifies the "test"/ This is true of your other points, too. There is one explanation of the generally forward spray of tissue (it may also be to the left, possibly much to the left) this "science" ignores. That is, what happens when there is an explosion? Is all the force focused in a single direction, with a projectile, that of the line of motion? I suspect the explosion is in all directions. But as to the spray, all the credible evidence is that most of it went in the wrong direction and much of this in one that is impossible under the official fiction. Unless math is no longer science.

Your quote from it, on the meaning of the head motion, is a copout. If there can be no unequivocal statement, why make any? How "scientific" is unofficial conjecture which is without support in the ignored but relevant material?

I agree he is uncomfortable about what he has done. That becomes clear on the cover pages and is one of the things that led me to think as I did. Alvarez is an arrogant whore. Olson's other work is at best dubious and much is grossly erroneous. His undergraduate training included police science. He did a bad paper on Zapruder, as I recall. And so you will understand, the backward and sideways motions are separate. One did not cause the other. More, before the body falls to its left, it pivots. I gave Hal a copy of a memo I did on this after discovering that PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH had smoked out the missing nine frames...Again I thank you for the time and above all, the forthrightness. Anything else could only deceive and perhaps lead me into more error. I'd welcome anything else you pick up or deduce. I hope Hal will find time for rapid communication, if there is anything to communicate...And I have sent him nothing he need keep secret from you (two)...Tearsheet: news to me. I wonder if someone has misplaced Raven Rock, Pa., in Virginia? Sincerely

15 September 1970
35 Castle Rock Drive
Mill Valley, Calif, 94941

Dear Harold:

Your note of Sept 4 arrived at a time when we had had no contact with Hal for about a month and when none was in prospect for a number of reasons. First, he was talking of going on a trip and for all we knew had left town temporarily. Second, we were starting a 10-day work week with a graveyard shift in the middle. Due to the difference in working hours, getting in touch with him is uncertain at best.

At our last meeting, Aug. 7, he had told us in a general way of the problem you outline, but was unable to convey the basis of the conclusion reached in the study, so we were quite in the dark until your letter arrived. Even then, there was no hint how the study had reached its conclusion: i.e., what physical principle or principles might be involved. On that basis, we could do nothing but reserve judgment, taking into consideration the fact that we really don't know the individual at all well. We have met him in the company of others a number of times, but as you know he is not a talkative person. Even so, I would have to say that we both had a very strong impression that here was a person who would go where his mind took him, one not easily misled or pressured into to anything counter to his own mental processes.

As it turned out, after your letter arrived, we were able to reach Hal, and he came over to dinner last Saturday, Sept.. 12. Without our having mentioned it in any way, he brought with him a copy of the study, and we were able to read it and gain some idea of what it really is.

We showed Hal your letter, as we feel you intended, and after we discussed the whole situation briefly he sat down at a typewriter and wrote a reply to you. We put it into a large envelope with some other material he had for you, and I mailed the whole thing from here Sunday, Sept. 13. He suggested that we read what he wrote, but we declined in the interests of keeping our reaction separate from his, for whatever that might be worth.

Hal says Mrs. Meagher also is much exercized about the study and that she has told the author bluntly that he has sold out. Hal's reaction to this was simply: "I know him. He's not one to sell out." We would agree on the basis of our slight acquaintance, but nevertheless are perplexed by the study and nearly everything about it. Without presuming to attempt any sort of analysis or critique, for which neither of us is qualified, of course, I would have to say that to suggest that findings based on the behavior of taped melons can be extended to that of the human head, particularly a human head attached to a living, human body, is a preposterous non sequitur. It seems to me that the body attachment factor is ignored completely. There are other holes which I haven't time to look up in this extremely poorly reproduced copy, but it seems to me that this single non sequitur stops the whole thing in its tracks.

I do think that the rocket jet principle is entirely admissible as far as it goes. He shows clearly that it operates with taped melons, but that is all that he shows. I must say that the upward-and-forward jet of brain tissue and liquid in Z313 always has seemed to me to be apparent evidence against a hit from the front -- and that your suggestion (which the author mentions) of two simultaneous or near-simultaneous hits, one from the front and the other from the rear, came nearest to explaining the anomaly presented by the upward-forward spurt and the violent backward movement of the head and body following the Z313 hit. (It's a dangerous and misleading oversimplification to refer to this as a head-snap. The body was thrown backward too).

(The author could have this factor in mind on page 22 where he says, eight lines down:

> "We claim that the motion of the President's head and the fragments ejected by the bullet are consistent with a single shot from the rear. As noted above, we are not claiming that what is observed could have been caused only by a shot from the rear." [his emphasis])

When Hal first told us about this thing, one of the first ideas that crossed my mind was the possible influence of the mentor, for the same reasons you mention. However, this did not square with our very strong impression of the author. It still doesn't. If forced to formulate a working hypothesis, I suppose I would tend toward one based on very subtle pressures, perhaps even on the subconscious level. I am unable to envision conscious complicity, if complicity is involved.

We both feel, on reading the study, that the author is basically uncomfortable about it, that he realizes its implications and even has done a good deal (not enough, I'll grant) to qualify his conclusion and soften the blow. To proceed to any further conclusion at this stage of my ignorance would not be justified.

I fear this will neither reassure you nor diminish your doubts, but we did want you to know that we acted upon your request as soon as we could and that we understand your concern and appreciate your feeling that you can talk to us about it.

Enclosed is a tearsheet Hal meant to include in his letter but which got misplaced in the general shuffle.

We are happy to hear about the new development with your book, and, as always, we both wish you nothing but the best.

Sincerely,

James D. White