

Mr. Harry Livingstone  
3025 Abell Ave.,  
Baltimore, Md. 21218

5/30/90

Dear Harry,

I respond to your yesterday's letter in haste on the chance we go out for supper. That would save a day in reaching you.

You underscore the word "question" and say that "some of the pictures appear to be altered without reason." But you at no point address why anyone would alter an autopsy picture without reason. Is it not a fact that there must be a reason for any alteration of any such photographs? Why would anyone run the risks entailed without some really compelling reason?

With regard to O'Connor, I begin by emphasizing that I have never said he is dishonest and do not even suggest it now. But I repeat that I'm confident that in some areas he is not correct. A number of innocent explanations are possible. My own belief is that where he is not correct it is part Lifton's influence and part just confused recollection.

You quote him as saying "that the large gash in the neck was painted it," after which you annotated "Why? Red herring?" You then say he "now says there was only a tear-dropped shaped hole there when they got the body." You add that Stringer also told you this. I say it is impossible. Among other things, read in Post Mortem what Dr. Perry told me about his strange cosmetic concerns when he knew the President was dead, that he made the incision horizontally, so the healed wound would look like a normal crease in the skin. There is no doubt that the tracheostomy was performed. Through a hole shaped like a tear drop? a hole of less than a quarter of an inch? Come on! This is impossible. See p 2 of #

With all he and Stringer and others said much later you have the problem of the existing contemporaneous records. And unless you conjecture that the entire world was part of a conspiracy you do have serious problems with using these people as witnesses.

There is no doubt at all that a shipping casket was delivered. There also is no doubt about why. It was shipped by the Military District of Washington, acting normally and automatically. When Lifton's fabrications appeared or I first heard of them, I'm not taking the time to check but you are welcome to, I filed a simple FOIA request of the MDW. I asked only for copies of what it had provided Lifton. I have them as I got them and you are welcome to read or copy them.

~~O'Connor~~  
He says there was no body in the bronze casket. Everybody else says there was. Read the Sibert-O'Neill report again, for example. It is in Post Mortem. They were there when it was opened and there simply wasn't time to cue them in on any hanky-panky. And the body was not in a body bag, as they and others who were there say *it wasn't*.

Check the list of those present in the Sibert-O'Neill report. They may have missed some who may have entered and left the autopsy room later but I doubt they missed any who were there to begin with. They have O'Connor as present at the autopsy but not as receiving the body or assisting in getting it out of the casket. What happened is that they body was removed for X-raying before the autopsy examination itself began and then was taken to the autopsy room.

I think O'Connor is quite wrong in saying that no pictures were taken after the autopsy began, by which I take him to have meant after the body was in the autopsy room and after the cutting of it began. I think, from recollection, that the pictures themselves refute this. From recollection, how else could they have photographed what is described as the unidentified oblong object inside the back of the head? and how about the film that the Secret Service exposed?

I don't know that there is any meaning in his statement that no pictures were taken after they started putting plaster in the head. That would have been done after the end of the autopsy, by the funeral-home technicians preparing the body for interment.

As for any "decoy ambulance," all that means is that there was a second ambulance there and he or Lifton or both decided that it was a decoy. What was the MDW GI casket delivered in? Was it an ambulance? Neither he nor Lifton, who knew of it, make any reference to this MDW casket. Or, was another ambulance there for other reasons, like delivering another Navy patient? Or the victim of an accident on the nearby road? \*\*

You say "there is no compelling evidence that the body was tampered with." I say there is no evidence at all, that this is Lifton's impossible fabrication. You follow this by saying that "It may have been as simple as slipping the body out of Parkland while the scene was staged over the casket." That is a dyadream and is not possible. The body was never unattended, there were many too many people present and there was an enormous press corps in and around the ambulance dock.

But were this done, how do you account for getting that body to Washington without any record of it and of getting it into the Navy hospital without any observation? and unless you are going for some of Lifton's crap, why would anyone have done this?

Do you have even the remotest notion of the simply enormous amount of work and people required by all this theorizing? All those people to somehow have been informed in advance of all the details none of which could have been known until after the shots were fired? Can you believe that the veritable army you are talking about consisted only of people who would forever be silent? Or have left no record of any kind at all? It is not reasonable.

I'm not competent to offer any opinion on any alteration of the pictures so - don't. You know what I've said about this in any event. I saw and see no purpose in it and my eyes, which are far from the best, do not see what Robert says he sees in what he published.

Before you assume that the report from the crime lab, the note you added on the envelope, "may be a trap," you ought ask yourself why the Baltimore crime lab would want to trap you or anyone else, including the colleague of those policemen Rick. I see no reason for them to. and my, my, how much more enormous the conspiracy grows!

They thought there might have been some airbrushing of a picture of the right side of the head, rather of the right eye there. Why? What purpose could that have served?

As I read and correct what I've written here you ask "Why" relating to the alleged non-existence of the slit in the throat, allegedly painted on, you do not address your own question. I think you should. Why? What purpose was or could have been served by this?

\*\* Few things are less unusual than ambulances at hospitals.

As I reread your letter I note that you asks me to prepare my case against the autopsists. Why them personally rather than their autopsy and their report(s) on it? While they cannot be separated from their report(s), why target them personally rather than their report(s), their work, their conclusions, etc.? Should not primary interest be in the work?

You say that O'Connor is giving you extensive notes. You need devil's advocacy much. If you have a finished documentary and any one part of it is refuted the whole thing is done in. and nothing will be believed. I suggested this earlier, in a different way. and it will seriously impair the sale of the reprint of the book.

Remember, the Dallas doctors told you one thing, on tape, and when they were taken in to see the autopsy pictures they came out and said they show what they remember. Learn from this. You don't want anything like this to happen to your documentary.

If you want to discuss any of the by phone, not until after Monday. A number of people are coming and will be here until that night.

Best to you all,

*Harold*