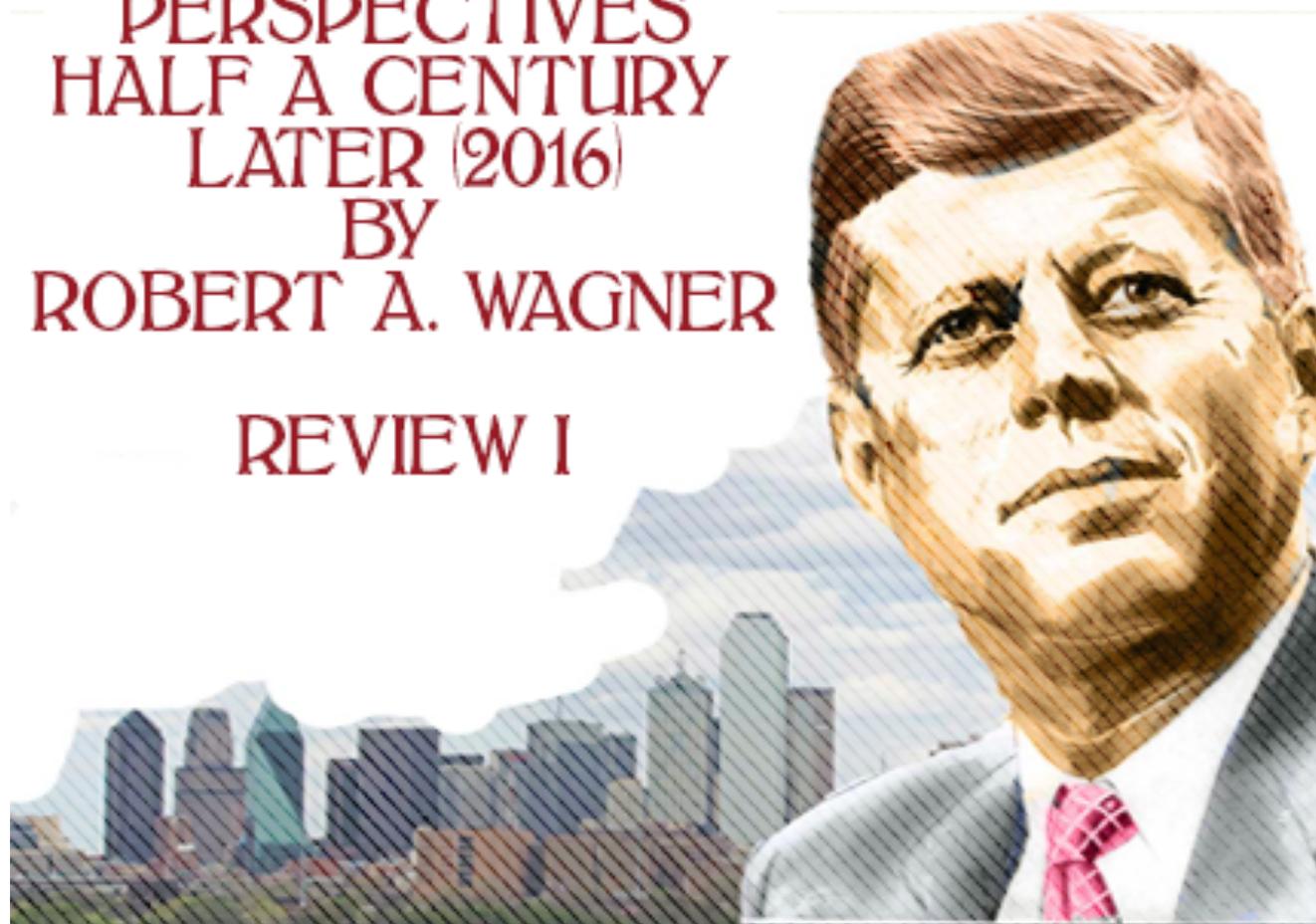


THE MANTIK VIEW

PERSPECTIVES
HALF A CENTURY
LATER (2016)
BY
ROBERT A. WAGNER

REVIEW I



THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK: PERSPECTIVES HALF A CENTURY LATER (2016)

BY ROBERT A. WAGNER

This is a review of Wagner's 2016 book.

Another Assassination of JFK Research: A Mystified Review

by David W. Mantik, MD, PhD [The Mantik View](#)

December 4, 2017

"If you are not a 'conspiracy theorist' ...then you are an 'idiot' in the Greek sense of the word."

--Charles Pigden (New Zealand Professor of Philosophy)¹

"The reality unknown to the public and to most members of Congress and the press is that secrets that would be of the greatest import to many of them can be kept from them reliably for decades by the executive branch. even though they are known to thousands of insiders."

--Daniel Ellsberg (who gave the Pentagon Papers to the NY Times)²

"...naturally, Oswald was the subject of great interest to both the CIA and the FBI even before the assassination. CIA would have explored every available asset abroad to establish his motives and activities."

--Jane Roman letter, undated but sometime in 1994 (in possession of Bill Simpich, JD)³

"These files are not in compliance with the law no matter what the main stream media says. They are an in-your-face flipped bird to the American public. They basically tell us that the CIA is saying that they don't have to comply with the law of the land and that they will not tell us their secrets and that there is nothing we can do about it. I've been here before. It was in a small room in CIA Headquarters in late 1978. I had been fighting to see a file generated by the CIA debriefing of Johnny Roselli. Scott Breckinridge and George Joannides had just handed me a highly redacted file that violated the HSCA/CIA Memorandum of Understanding mandating unexpurgated access

¹ <https://philpapers.org/rec/PIGCTA-2>. The Greek sense refers to "...someone so politically purblind as to have no opinions about either history or public affairs." This is *not* a specific reference to the JFK case. For usage over time of that absurd phrase, "conspiracy theorist," see

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=conspiracy+theorist&year_start=1800&year_end=2010&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cconspiracy%20theorist%3B%2Cc0. Also search on "lone nut."

We should also recognize that special prosecutor, Robert Mueller, has now self-enrolled as a conspiracy theorist—after all, he has cited Paul Manafort for conspiracy.

² <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2006/1/22/180382/>

³ Cf. *State Secrets*, by Bill Simpich, Chapter 5. Simpich helped to organize the Mock Trial, and played a leading role in it. Jane Roman was a career counterintelligence (CI) officer for CIA, in fact, the CI liaison for James Angleton. In 1963 she wrote critical cables about Oswald, which she later acknowledged were false.

Cf. https://www.history-matters.com/essays/frameup/WhatJaneRomanSaid/WhatJaneRomanSaid_1.htm

by HSCA to CIA files. They stood by, grinning, as they watched my reaction upon opening the file to find it largely expurgated. They were grinning so hard because they knew they had waited out the HSCA and there was nothing I could do about it. The Angleton strategy still worked. It is still working today.”

--Dan L. Hardway (former counsel for the HSCA)⁴

“Preliminary reports indicated more than one person was involved in the shooting. The electric chair is too good for the killers.”

--Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade (6 PM, November 22, 1963)

“I’d almost bet on the (anti-Castro) Cubans” being in on the assassination.

--Nicholas Katzenbach, Deputy DA under JFK (shortly before his death in 2012)⁵

“We know the CIA was involved, and the Mafia. We all know that.”

--Richard Goodwin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs⁶

“It is inconceivable that a secret intelligence arm of the government has to comply with all the overt orders of government.”

--James Jesus Angleton⁷

The purpose of the 1992 JFK Act was to “tamp down some of the assassination conspiracy theories.”

--Rachel Maddow (MSNBC, October 25, 2017)⁸

⁴ “The Intelligence Community Flips Off America”

This was written on November 3, 2017, about the (missing) JFK record releases:

<https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/the-intelligence-community-flips-off-america>.

⁵ *Brothers* (2007) by David Talbot, p. 290.

Cf. https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/JFK_Assassination_Quotes_by_Government_Officials.html

⁶ Talbot, p. 303. Goodwin joined JFK’s speech writing staff in 1959. In August 1961, he met secretly with Che Guevara in Uruguay. His wife, Doris Kearns Goodwin, helped LBJ draft his memoirs. She was also the first female journalist to enter the Boston Red Sox locker room.

⁷ Angleton was testifying before the 1975 US Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee). Cf. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (2008) by Tim Weiner, p. 390.

⁸ This phrase appears nowhere in the JFK Act; even the well-educated Maddow (PhD from Oxford) revealed her bias here. The purpose of the Act, of course, was to increase governmental transparency. Douglas Horne reports that during the ARRB, his superior (Jeremy Gunn) often heard similar biased comments during various government meetings. When Gunn corrected such a speaker on the spot, it was never appreciated. Also note Maddow’s curious use of “some,” rather than “all.” Did she therefore mean that some conspiracy theories were acceptable? Douglas Horne and I volunteered to appear on her show, but she never replied, so she must not like our conclusions either. See Jim DiEugenio’s discussion of Maddow’s madness here: <https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/rachel-maddow-jfk-and-easy-money>.

Introduction

During the Mock Trial of Oswald (November 16-17, 2017) at the South Texas College of Law—Houston, Wagner sat at the prosecution’s bench, where he advised that side. I had never seen his name before (except in Hollywood movies), so I was mystified by the persistent image of his book cover on the overhead screen.

When I first walked into the lobby for the Mock Trial, Wagner (a well-attired, youthful, albeit middle-aged man) politely introduced himself to me, but then just before departing on the second day, I asked him several pointed questions:

1. Did he know which doctors had seen JFK’s forehead entry wound at Parkland? He did not know; in fact, his book states unequivocally (and falsely) that “...no Parkland doctor reported observing a wound above the right eye.” Unfortunately for Wagner, I have listed *ten* supporting witnesses for such a wound, including Quentin Schwinn (a photographic expert for the US government), who saw this wound in an apparent original autopsy photograph.⁹ I also own a video of Charles Crenshaw, MD, pointing to his high right forehead.¹⁰
2. Did he have an explanation for the 6.5 mm object on JFK’s AP skull X-ray—the one that *no one saw* at the autopsy? He had none, although I have published just such an explanation in the professional literature.¹¹
3. Did he really believe that Humes had merely made an innocent mistake in locating the metal fragment trail on the X-rays—as opposed to *deliberately misplacing it*? He opted for the mistake, to which I advised him that even my son—now in medical school—would never have made such a disastrous blunder, even at age 7. I know this because I had discussed this case with him when he was 7.

During my cross examination by Gus Pappas (the prosecutor) he asked if I believed in a Grassy Knoll shot. Pappas obviously expected me to deny this. He would have prized such an answer, because it would have sown dissension among the defense. After all, other defense witnesses had supported such a shot. However, the prosecution was

⁹ See my e-book, *JFK’s Head Wounds* (2015), Figure 37. The ten witnesses are listed in the book.

¹⁰ My video antedates any extant YouTube videos of Charles Crenshaw. In any case, the forehead wound is discussed in *JFK: A Conspiracy of Silence* (1992) by Charles Crenshaw, Jens Hansen, and J. Gary Shaw. Furthermore, Boswell gave the store away when he described this forehead site as an *incised wound*! With this statement he implied two separate and critical facts: (1) a *wound* was indeed located at the (high) forehead, and (2) an *incision* (via scalpel) had been made directly through the wound. No such incision had been made at Parkland, but the autopsy photograph clearly shows precisely such an incision at that very site. Boswell’s statement is here: <http://jfkassassination.net/russ/testimony/boswella.htm>. The autopsy image (with forehead incision) is here (the second image): <http://www.celebritymorgue.com/jfk/fjk-autopsy.html>.

¹¹ My article on this profound paradox, (THE JOHN F. KENNEDY AUTOPSY X-RAYS: THE SAGA OF THE LARGEST “METALLIC FRAGMENT”) was published in a peer-reviewed journal.

It is exceedingly rare for any JFK assassination paper to be professionally published. As expected, Wagner does not cite this article.

surprised when I supported such a shot. This question promptly disclosed a critical prosecution oversight—they had not done their homework. In particular, the prosecution had not read my e-book (published the year *before* Wagner’s book). In that book I had clarified, in tedious detail (with images), my conclusions about such a successful Grassy Knoll shot. Prior to that I had expressed some doubt about the *success* of such a shot, although I had long suspected that a shot had been fired from the Knoll.

Wagner’s incongruous ignorance (about truly critical facts), in the face of his obvious advisory role, perplexed me. Why would the prosecution rely on someone with such apparent flaws? It was therefore with some fear and apprehension that I began to read Wagner’s book: fear—because I strongly suspected that ignorance would prevail, and apprehension—because this case has already seen far too many deceptive and naïve books. My fear and apprehension were justified—in spades, as I outline below. Here I list only 20 issues, although that number could easily have been multiplied several times over.

Twenty Serious Issues¹²

1. WAGNER: “... did he [Perry] actually have *all* the medical and forensic *evidence* to make unequivocal statements about the direction [of the bullet] ...? The answer to that question certainly is no.”

MANTIK: Unfortunately for Wagner, he had played his hand too soon. The recent JFK releases include a statement from Perry’s surgical colleague at the University of Washington. Perry had admitted to Dr. Donald Miller, Jr., that he had told the truth on November 22, 1963 (it was an entry wound), but then later (under pressure) he had lied to the Warren Commission (WC):

<http://crosscut.com/2017/11/john-f-kennedy-assassination-files-seattle-trump-release-shooters/>

To make matters even worse, my colleague, Mike Chesser, MD,¹³ *at that same Mock Trial*, served as an expert witness and Chesser related what another of Perry’s medical friends had told him. Just one month before the Trial, Dr. Austin Griner told Dr. Chesser¹⁴ that federal agents had threatened Perry (born in Allen, Texas) with deportation if he did not reverse his initial report of an entrance

¹² I used Wagner’s Kindle version, which means that I am unable to cite page numbers.

¹³ Dr. Chesser reported the most critical new evidence at the Mock Trial. While viewing the extant JFK X-rays at the Archives he had seen myriads of tiny metallic particles in the high forehead (consistent with that forehead entry site). These tiny particles were located adjacent to a hole (possibly from a bullet) through the forehead bone. Such tiny particles clustered near the surface can only imply a bullet entry at that site. It would have been interesting to get Wagner’s reaction to this hard evidence. We know what the prosecution’s reaction was—total indifference. A Chesser lecture is here: <http://assassinationofjfk.net/a-review-of-the-jfk-cranial-x-rays-and-photographs/>. My follow-up comments are here: <http://assassinationofjfk.net/jfk-autopsy-x-rays-proved-fraudulent/>.

¹⁴ On the first day of the Mock Trial, Dr. Chesser telephoned Dr. Griner, who agreed that Chesser could disclose his name during the Trial.

wound. Astonishingly, after hearing this, the prosecutor aggressively belittled Dr. Chesser's report.

Of course, it was already well known that James Gochenaur (in 1970) had spoken to SS agent Elmer Moore (later a special agent to Earl Warren).¹⁵ Moore admitted that he had strong-armed Perry; Moore later apologized for this action, but he insisted that Kennedy was a "traitor" for being soft on the Russians, and he added that it was too bad people had to die but maybe it was a good thing for the U.S. (sic).

Wagner also overlooks the fact that Parkland was a tertiary trauma center, so their physicians saw zillions of gunshot wounds. Not a single physician at Parkland (before sensing political pressure) described the throat wound as an exit wound. Only a WC lawyer (Arlen Specter) was deemed qualified enough to identify it as an exit wound.

I have analyzed the throat wound—showing via a CT scan how unlikely such a penetrating trajectory must be (in the absence of corresponding injury to the intervening vertebra or lung).¹⁶ Wagner also mocks the critics for their supposed inability to explain where that bullet went—but this is merely another blunder. Randy Robertson, MD, has just discovered the original notes of Dr. James Young (a White House physician), who had found a misshapen, but intact bullet *inside the limousine* that night.¹⁷ This bullet had gone unreported for all these 54 years. Wagner will surely find this discovery a bit disconcerting, especially because he had enjoyed claiming that no one knew where that frontal bullet had gone.

I have also proposed that the throat wound might have derived, not from a bullet, but rather from a glass shard from the penetrating hole in the windshield. Multiple witnesses at Parkland (including a policeman and a physician) saw a *through and through* hole in the windshield. It is also striking that JFK had three tiny holes in his cheek that leaked embalming fluid (as noted by Tom Robinson, the mortician). The professional literature on such windshield shots clearly describes the scattering cone as a very small angle, which means that no one else in the limousine would have been struck. Glass shards from this shot could well have struck JFK in the throat. The missing bullet may be the one that Dr. John Young discovered in the limousine that night. Furthermore, tiny shards from this shot are

¹⁵ http://www.whokilledjfk.net/secret_service_agent_elmer_moore.htm

¹⁶ *Assassination Science* (1998), edited by James Fetzer, p. 153.

Cf. https://www.krusch.com/books/kennedy/Assassination_Science.pdf.

The CT image is here: *Murder in Dealey Plaza* (2000), edited by James Fetzer, p. 3.

Cf. https://www.krusch.com/books/kennedy/Murder_In_Dealey_Plaza.pdf.

A color image may be seen in *Cover-up* (1998) by Stewart Galanor.

Wagner never cites this troubling and evocative CT scan.

¹⁷ <https://whowhatwhy.org/2017/10/06/navy-doctor-bullet-found-jfks-limousine-never-reported/>

also a viable explanation, not just for the throat wound, but also for the tiny holes in JFK's cheek.

That the windshield was replaced (and the original one trashed) is well documented by the recollections of a Ford Motor Company supervisor (George Whitaker) from Dearborn, Michigan, who saw the penetrating windshield hole.¹⁸ A close relative (who had worked for the Ford Motor Company) of my University of Michigan Medical School roommate had also reported similar suspicions to his family. Furthermore, my good friend and colleague, Robert Livingston, MD,¹⁹ told me that he had heard about an order for a replacement windshield (i.e., the one now at the Archives, *not* the one that was newly placed into the limousine). For pertinent images and further details about the windshield and the throat wound trajectory see my online essay (also not cited by Wagner):

<https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-reviews/mcadams-john-jfk-assassination-logic-how-to-think-about-claims-of-conspiracy-1>

Livingston had also phoned Humes before the autopsy to tell him about the entry wound in the throat; therefore, the pathologists—despite their denials—*did know* about this wound during the autopsy. In 1963, Livingston was the Scientific Director of the National Institute of Mental Health *and* the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness. These two facilities are located just across the Rockville Pike from the National Naval Medical Center.

Finally, WC loyalists' persistent claim that ER doctors often misinterpret wounds (e.g., confusing exit for entrance) cleverly evades these facts (as does Wagner):

- A. Such a tiny exit wound could *not* be duplicated in experiments by the WC;
- B. Milton Helpert, who had done 60,000 autopsies, had *never seen* an exit wound that small;
- C. Before political leverage was exerted, the first scenario by NPIC included *a throat shot* at Z-190;
- D. During a WC Executive Session (December 18, 1963), John McCloy, Hale Boggs, and Gerald Ford discussed a *possible frontal shot* from the overpass.

¹⁸ Fetzer 2000, p. 129. Douglas Weldon, JD, interviewed Whitaker, who said, "It was a good clean bullet hole, right straight through, from the front. And you can tell, when the bullet hits the windshield, like when you hit a rock or anything, what happens. The back chips out and the front may just have a pinhole in it This had a clean round hole in the front and fragmented in the back. ..."

Weldon concluded the interview by asking how certain Whitaker was that the bullet hole he saw in the windshield came from the front.

Whitaker: "I worked in the industry for forty years and I've seen all kinds of testing on glass and I know it came from the front."

Weldon: "So you're 100% certain."

Whitaker: "I'm 100% positive that it came from the front!"

¹⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Livingston_\(scientist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Livingston_(scientist)).

2. WAGNER: “A ragged appearance is typically associated with an exit wound. Never, to my knowledge, is this contemporaneous note mentioned by those conspiracy researchers who cite later Parkland doctor statements that the throat wound was small and circular.”

MANTIK: Wagner should now be delighted to hear that I am the first to accept this possibility. After all, if a glass shard caused this wound, it may well have been a bit ragged.

3. WAGNER: “Dr. Aguilar, a pathologist...”

MANTIK: This is a remarkable display of ignorance. Gary Aguilar, a good friend and fellow traveler in this JFK case since 1992, is well known in the JFK research community as an *ophthalmologist*. Dr. Aguilar was an expert witness at the Mock Trial—and he publicly announced his specialty there.

4. WAGNER: “Doubters of the lone-gunman thesis could always suggest a murky and suspicious chain of possession, nursing their claims with the fact that the president’s brain, eventually disappeared.”

MANTIK: This is another display of ignorance. The anthology, *The Assassinations: Probe Magazine on JFK, MLK, RFK and Malcolm X* (2003), included an article by Cyril Wecht and me, which was solely devoted to JFK’s brain.²⁰ The article included a detailed analysis of the chain of possession, as well as the likely current location of the brain. This unique article was not cited by Wagner—nor did he cite the anthology (edited by James DiEugenio and Lisa Pease).

Moreover, Douglas Horne, and his superior, Jeremy Gunn, had both concluded (during the ARRB) that two separate brain examinations had been done—of two different brains.²¹ Furthermore, the photographer, John Stringer, did not recognize the official brain photographs (not just based on the images, but also based on the photographic paper).²²

To really clinch this case, however, my optical density data (directly from the extant X-rays at the Archives) prove a near total absence of brain in a large frontal area—on both sides. Because the photographs show no such major absence of brain tissue in this large frontal area, this is one of the most shocking (but often overlooked) paradoxes in the entire JFK case. One is forced to choose: either the photographs are not authentic, or the

²⁰ “Paradoxes of the JFK Assassination: The Brain Enigma” by David W. Mantik and Cyril H. Wecht.

Cf. <https://archive.org/details/assassinationspr00jame>.

²¹ Fetzner 2000, p. 299.

²² Here is a more comprehensive report by Horne: <http://assassinationofjfk.net/alterd-history-deceit-and-deception-in-the-jfk-assassination-medical-evidence/>.

My review of Horne’s five-volume work is here: <https://www.assassinationsscience.com/HorneReview.pdf>

X-rays are not authentic. One cannot have it both ways. As we would now expect though, Wagner ignores this incredible conundrum, which I wrote about years ago.

5. WAGNER: “What is the evidence of tampering? If it can be shown that the autopsy X-rays are authentic, can this explain away the inaccuracy of all the witnesses?”

MANTIK: My essay, “Twenty Conclusions after Nine Visits” [at the Archives]²³ addresses most of these issues. But there is no need to malign the eyewitnesses; these were mostly *professionals* who *promptly* reported *salient* features—conditions that make accuracy very likely. Review the essential criteria for such accuracy, as reported in *Eyewitness Testimony* (1992) by Elizabeth Loftus of the University of Washington. My e-book contains a detailed analysis of these false claims about unreliable JFK eyewitnesses. I also demonstrate conclusively that the X-rays are indeed those of JFK (except where critical and identifiable alterations have been inserted).

Furthermore, the X-rays *are consistent* with the eyewitnesses’ recall of an occipital defect. Although there was some initial justification for this confusion, it has been a major (and totally unnecessary) typhoon in a thimble. This denigration of eyewitnesses has continued for far too long. Wagner ignores the compelling and consistent agreement of the eyewitnesses (with one another), and also seems ingenuously uninformed of what the X-rays actually show, as I illustrate in detail in my e-book. He also forgets that the sole radiologist at the autopsy, John Ebersole, MD,²⁴ described a large right occipital hole *despite seeing the X-rays that night*. So, despite what Wagner claims, there is no problem here, i.e., the witnesses and X-rays agree.

6. A. WAGNER: “I believe it is clear that the autopsy doctors were not participating in a cover-up during the autopsy.”
B. WAGNER: “Unbelievably, unlike millions of American, the three pathologists who made up the official autopsy team were unaware of statements from the Dallas medical team informing the rest of the world at a press conference that there was a gunshot wound in Kennedy’s throat.”

MANTIK: On the contrary, they assisted the cover-up! No layman co-opted off the street would so drastically have misplaced the metal fragment trail (in the official autopsy report) on the X-rays. Nonetheless, Wagner truly believes that *three experienced pathologists* made the *same* 4-inch “mistake”! According to Doug Horne, when Humes testified under oath before the ARRB, he was totally

²³ <https://assassinationresearch.com/v2n2/pittsburgh.pdf>

²⁴ I called Ebersole (and spoke to him), and then later he returned my call. This latter conversation was recorded, and is available online: https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/images/5/5d/ARRB_Ebersole-Mantik.mp3. The original recording is at the Archives. The transcript is at Fetzer 2000, p. 433.

flustered when asked about this “mistake,” and Humes almost walked out of the room. In fact, during that critical night the pathologists had no choice. They had seen (and palpated) an entry hole *low* on the posterior skull, but they also saw a fragment trail *more than 4 inches superior to this!* Such an enormous gap is totally inconsistent with a single shot. Rather, it can only mean two headshots—which they well knew was not a tolerable scenario. After all, before they started their work, they had been told that three shots had been fired and that JFK had fallen *forward*. So, if Wagner and I cannot agree that this was an *overt cover-up* (and not an innocent mistake), then we live in two different logical universes—and all hope of meaningful discourse promptly dissolves. Mere semantics *cannot* resolve this fundamental dilemma.

Of course, Humes (but not his sidekick Boswell) persistently denied knowledge of the throat wound during the autopsy. In fact, Humes did know about this wound (for many reasons, as Kathy (Cunningham) Evans²⁵ has outlined—and as Wagner has ignored), not the least because Robert Livingston had told him.²⁶ Humes instead, in order to support the cover-up, chose to lie about his knowledge. Of course, Wagner also evades this issue. These pathologists, in his mind, only wore white coats.

7. WAGNER: “Dr. Gerald McDonnell...reported that an alteration of the [X-ray] images... should be readily...discernable in a number of ways:
 - A. Observation of a difference in *density* of the images.
 - B. Discontinuity of anatomical structures.
 - C. Alteration of continuity of an abnormal pattern.
 - D. Production of an image which is not anatomical or an image of an impossible pathologic process.”²⁷

MANTIK: Wagner has now walked right into my study, to which I warmly welcome him. For several decades now, I have emphasized points A and D, e.g., how the optical *densities* of the White Patch and the 6.5 mm object are pure paradoxes. In particular, these densities are not anatomical—and they are both impossible. To put a truly fine point on this, my entire planned presentation for this Mock Trial was an overview (with many pertinent images) of the three clues to alteration of the JFK autopsy X-rays. To save time, the reader may simply visit the online website for my presentation:

²⁵ https://history-matters.com/essays/jfkmed/How5Investigations/How5InvestigationsGotItWrong_1a.htm

²⁶ During the *JAMA* lawsuit brought by Charles Crenshaw, Livingston confirmed this *under oath*.

²⁷ Wagner quotes McDonnell for this itemized list. These are the criteria that McDonnell had offered for his verdict that the X-rays were unaltered. Unfortunately for him, his conclusion was wrong. After all, he had not been trained as a medical physicist.

<https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/the-state-of-texas-vs-lee-harvey-oswald-the-jfk-autopsy-skull-x-rays>

Wagner was quite oblivious to these conclusions. Furthermore, he has never visited the Archives himself—nor has he done any original research (so far as I know), nor even interviewed a single witness! For Wagner to quote McDonnell and then simultaneously remain oblivious of my directly relevant conclusions is more than stunning; it implies a certain recklessness of tactics. Furthermore, my public presentation of these issues is not recent; my complete visual essay for JFK Lancer from 2009 is still visible online,²⁸ so no excuses can be offered for Wagner’s 8 years of innumeracy.

8. WAGNER: “The doctors said they saw cerebellum tissue, which the autopsy photographs and X-rays indicate would have been impossible.”

MANTIK: “Indicator 15” in my e-book (which Wagner has not read) analyzes this statement in detail. Up to *nine* Parkland physicians saw cerebellar tissue that day, including at least *two neurosurgeons*. If a neurosurgeon made that kind of mistake, I would never let him operate on me.²⁹ (The difference between cerebellar and cerebral tissue could easily be demonstrated to a grammar school child.) On the contrary, all nine of these doctors were correct. See the anatomic diagrams in my e-book, which show how trivial it was to see cerebellum through the Harper fragment defect in the posterior skull.

9. WAGNER: “We know the president’s body was not altered prior to the autopsy...”

MANTIK: Where does one even begin with this leviathan? At this same Mock Trial, the new documentary, “The Parkland Doctors,” was screened. It was palpably obvious that these *seven* Parkland doctors, sitting in a semicircle, totally agreed that the autopsy photographs *did not agree (at all)* with their Parkland recollections. So, how does Wagner explain this? We can now anticipate the same monologue: they *all* made the same mistake! (How many times now have we heard that?)

Moreover, Doug Horne has addressed the issue of body alteration in extraordinary detail—and with disquieting documentary proof; something happened to the body before the official autopsy began. Furthermore, how does Wagner explain the bag of bullet and bone fragments that James Jenkins saw lying next to JFK’s head that night? And how does he explain the statement (about bullet fragments from JFK’s head) that Dennis David typed? These

²⁸ https://www.assassinationscience.com/JFK_Skull_X-rays.htm. For a correction, see <http://assassinationofjfk.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Correction-David-Mantik.pdf>.

²⁹ Ironically, until several years ago, my nephew was a neurosurgeon at Parkland.

questions could go on endlessly, but do not expect Wagner to touch any of them with anything shorter than a flag pole.

10. WAGNER: “Something else is apparent in Zapruder frame 313 that does not get a lot of mention in the conspiracy books: human tissue is clearly projected forward.”

MANTIK: It certainly has been mentioned by me. I discussed these spatter issues in detail in my critique of Sherry Fiester’s book at

<https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-reviews/fiester-sherry-p-enemy-of-the-truth-myths-forensics-and-the-kennedy-assassination>

However, the far deeper problem here (totally unnoticed by Wagner) is this: JFK’s head cannot possibly be in the correct orientation) at Z-313 to match the metallic trail across the top of the skull X-rays (it is tilted way too far forward). The trajectory of this metallic trail matches *neither* a frontal shot at Z-313 *nor* a posterior shot (unless it came from behind in a balloon hovering far above Dealey Plaza). This profoundly troubling issue is addressed meticulously (with images) in the foregoing review. Since first posing this conundrum in the 1990s, it remains one of the all-time great paradoxes in the JFK case (although still widely unappreciated). *No one has even attempted to explain it*, so it is expected that Wagner would know nothing about it. In any case, the logical conclusion is truly terrifying for Wagner’s case: *Z-313 profoundly disagrees with the X-rays*. One of them must be inauthentic. In this case, my choice is to rely on the X-rays, which then points a gleaming accusatory finger at Z-313. Of course, this paradox was almost inevitable; after all, the felons who altered the Z-film had no access to the X-rays.

11. WAGNER: “The autopsy doctors never wavered in confirming the authenticity of that photograph.”

MANTIK: This is misleading. The pathologists refused to identify the “red spot” on the back of the head (Wagner’s Figure 4.2).³⁰ So desperate was Pierre Finck that he inquired whether this was a photograph of JFK! And, of course, when Humes was asked about the entry site on the back of the skull X-rays (for the HSCA) he finally buckled and went along with the high entry site on the skull. On my video of this event, I can see him point to this site. But this was the only time he did so. Before and after that, he always insisted on the lower entry site. So much for consistency by the pathologists.

³⁰ James Humes: “I can assure you that as we reflected the scalp to get to this point, there was no defect corresponding to this [red spot] in the skull at any point. I don't know what that [red spot] is. It could be to me clotted blood. I don't, I just don't know what it is, but is certainly was not a wound of entrance” (7HSCA 254). A color image of the red spot is in Figure 22 here: <https://assassinationresearch.com/v2n2/pittsburgh.pdf>.

12. WAGNER: “The same problem occurs when researchers—like Lifton, Horne, Aguilar, Fetzer, and Mantik—promote analyses that ignore the abundant evidence of Oswald’s guilt.”

MANTIK: I disagree with this. In fact, I told Wagner explicitly that Oswald was likely a patsy—just as he said he was. When Oswald made this claim (just before his death) he immediately cited his time in Soviet Union, which Wagner promptly seized upon as Oswald’s *sole* reason for his role as patsy. But the truth is much more troubling—and Wagner ignores all these issues:

- A. In the summer of 1963, anti-Castro Cuban terrorist Antonio Veciana (an Alpha 66 collaborator with the CIA) spotted Oswald for about 15 minutes in downtown Dallas (at the Southland Center) in the company of master CIA spy David Phillips.³¹
- B. In a military training film, Robert Tanenbaum recalls seeing Oswald in the company of anti-Castro Cubans.³² In the past month, I reviewed Tanenbaum’s recollection with him. Tanenbaum also played defense attorney at the Mock Trial.
- C. Several witnesses were positive they saw Jack Ruby and Oswald together.
- D. During the summer of 1963, multiple witnesses in Clinton, Louisiana linked Oswald to Clay Shaw (and possibly also to David Ferrie).
- E. Oswald was undeniably seen in a photograph with Ferrie at a 1955 Civil Air Patrol cookout.³³
- F. Between Oswald’s October 1959 defection and his death in 1963, James Angleton controlled Oswald’s file. Furthermore, Angleton forever hid this fact—from the WC and from the HSCA—until his own death in 1988.
- G. John Newman and Malcolm Blunt reported (at the November in Dallas Conference, November 17-18, 2017) that, according to CIA documents, internal communications about Oswald were *only* to be sent to counterintelligence. But here is the coup de grace: this CIA request occurred *before* Oswald defected!³⁴
- H. Malcolm Blunt interviewed Pete Bagley (of the CIA), who was described by many observers as the best counterintelligence analyst of the Cold War era. Blunt displayed to Bagley the documents that

³¹ <http://garyrevel.com/jfk/antonioandoswald2.html>. Phillips’s career included CIA chief of station and CIA chief of Western Hemisphere operations. Veciana stated: “I have no doubt that President Kennedy’s assassination was a conspiracy. ... Castro was not involved.... The President was killed by other people for other reasons.” Cf. <http://jfkcountercoup.blogspot.com/2015/03/the-southland-center-revisited-w-new.html>.

³² <http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/arrb/index32.htm>

³³ <https://www.google.com/search?q=oswald+ferrie+photo&oq=oswald+and+ferrie&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l2.15108j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

³⁴ <https://larryhancok.wordpress.com>.

captured Oswald's paper trail, as collected by the Security Research Staff (SRS) after Oswald's defection. When Blunt proposed that Oswald was "unwitting," Bagley promptly replied, "OH NO—HE HAD TO BE WITTING."³⁵

13. WAGNER: "... Mantik's thesis, developed by unquestionably painstaking analysis, is felled by internal and external contradictions. In the bargain, Mantik lays waste to the notion of a head shot from the Grassy Knoll."

MANTIK: First off, I only initially doubted that the Grassy Knoll shot was successful—not that it was fired. In my e-book I describe why I now believe that it was successful. (It is related to the precise angle of the shot—as well as the exact site of entry.) More importantly, though, in my initial article³⁶ on the optical density (OD) data I meticulously describe how the authentic fragments are totally consistent with one another, whereas the fake fragments are grossly inconsistent. But Wagner ignores all these (many) internal comparisons; remarkably enough, he does not even cite *Assassination Science*, so most likely he has never read this seminal article. Furthermore, and quite stunningly, the phrase "optical density" does not appear anywhere in his book! No one can honestly omit that phrase in any such discussion, or fail to read that initial essay, and then peremptorily reject the entire OD opus. It is therefore highly presumptuous, and a display of ingenuous hubris, for Wagner to claim that the OD analysis has been "felled."

If I knew why Wagner concludes that the OD case has been "felled" I would reply on point. Unfortunately, I cannot ascertain his meaning. I am not aware of any inconsistencies, nor has anyone else—over several decades—brought them to my attention. In fact, it would be quite extraordinary if Wagner has stumbled onto something that everyone else has missed. *It is now time for Wagner to speak up.* Moreover, many of these OD findings have now been confirmed (at the Archives, and now also at the Boston JFK library) by Mike Chesser, MD. I can only conclude that Wagner is quite mistaken about this.

14. WAGNER: "If this claim of pre-autopsy alteration ...were true, why would the supposed non-conspirator Bethesda witnesses...not report the enlarged wound extending to the top of the head?"

MANTIK: Wagner clearly does not appreciate the size of the initial skull wound. In fact, it did not solely involve the occipital area. As the official autopsy report states, it involved the temporal and parietal and occipital areas. The physicians in

³⁵ *Countdown to Darkness: The Assassination of President Kennedy*, Volume II (2017) by John Newman, pp. 29-30. Also see the Appendix below.

³⁶ Fetzer 1998, p. 120.

“The Parkland Doctors” agreed with that, and I accept that, too. If that is not accepted, one falls into a huge black hole, where witnesses disagree with one another left and right—and center, too. Most Parkland witnesses could not appreciate the magnitude of this hole, partly because they focused on only part of the skull (or could only see part of it), but also because JFK’s hair obscured much of the defect. Wagner even cites witnesses for this latter point. This nonsense is a needless distraction—we should simply accept the large defect. See my e-book for further discussion of this issue. So, again despite what Wagner claims, no problem exists here either.

15. WAGNER: “...Mantik’s analysis ... is flawed and there is no credible evidence of alteration to the Zapruder film.”

MANTIK: Wagner is here leaping way outside of his expertise—and he cannot possibly make his case with such meagre words. He first needs to develop some serious skills in physics to address the overwhelming case for film alteration made by theoretical (and optical) physicist John Costella.³⁷ And surely one must read *The Great Zapruder Film Hoax: Deceit and Deception in the Death of JFK*³⁸ before trashing arguments against the film, but Wagner does not even cite this book! Wagner might instead want to think deeply about Ludwig Wittgenstein’s advice: “That whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent.”

Furthermore, by baldly making this claim, Wagner belittles the recollections of many independent observers: Greg Burnham, Millicent Cranor, Scott Myers, Dan Rather, Cartha DeLoach, William Reymond, William Manchester, Homer McMahon, Dino Brugioni, Erwin Schwartz, Rich Delarosa,³⁹ and others. Each one of these, without conferring with anyone else, has seen a version of the Zapruder film that contradicts the extant one. Surely, we should not again hear this: “They all just made the same mistake.”⁴⁰

Wagner has not seen high resolution, early generation copies of the Zapruder film, nor has he studied (at the Archives, as I have) the anomalies of the SS copies, nor has he evaluated the film maps of the extant film and the SS copies. The Black Patch over the back of JFK’s head is grossly (even preposterously) apparent in a copy obtained directly from the Archives by Sydney Wilkinson. This is a US government authorized and certified, third generation, 35 mm, dupe neg of the “forensic version” of the Zapruder film. Here is an image (from Z-317),

³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Y6RaDmG0hs> and <http://johncostella.com/jfk/>

Before Costella’s elegant analyses, mathematician Daryll Weatherly made astute observations that cast serious doubt on the Z-film. For his work, see the JFK books by Harrison Livingstone.

³⁸ Published in 2003, and edited by James Fetzer.

³⁹ Dellarosa offers his personal descriptions of the action here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrRbkY9gEnQ>.

⁴⁰ David Lifton will suggest (in his forthcoming book) that Robert S. McNamara approved the Z-film alteration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMblToYoWzA>.

which is of course even further removed (in resolution) from what Wilkinson and I saw (as supplied here by Thom Whitehead, Wilkinson's husband):⁴¹



The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas received *first* generation copies of the Z-film from the Archives.⁴² In 2009, Wilkinson and I (sitting at the same table) viewed these MPI images at the Museum. The Black Patch was even more grossly (and ludicrously) apparent then.

Finally, Wagner surely did not appreciate the comments (at the banquet during the Mock Trial), by Alec Baldwin. He reported that the Kennedy family believes that the Zapruder film has been altered. As a participant, is it possible that Jackie knew what really happened? In my work, I discuss one of her chief recollections—which is totally inconsistent with the extant film, but which agrees with another witness (William Manchester) who had seen the original film 75 times.⁴³

16. WAGNER: “No, a government-wide conspiracy was not responsible for President Kennedy’s assassination.”

MANTIK: In that case, I want to know exactly how Oswald altered the skull X-rays. And then there is Admiral Burkley, MD, who refused to agree with the WC

⁴¹ Whitehead: “It’s the same 3rd gen dupe neg film element we’ve always had; however, we scanned it at 4k with 16-bit color depth to show more color differential.”

⁴² The so-called original film is generation *zero*, so what Wilkinson and I saw in Dallas was only one step removed from the extant film, i.e., the images we saw were copied directly from the extant film. I use “extant” because we now know that the current film in the Archives cannot be the original. Whether the original still exists is unknown.

⁴³ *The Manchester Affair* (1967) by John Corry, p. 45.

on the number of shots that hit JFK.⁴⁴ Does Wagner truly know more about this than Burkley? Furthermore, Wagner's conclusion heedlessly disagrees with the following individuals, all of whom accept conspiracy:⁴⁵

Lyndon Baines Johnson, President of the United States
Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States
John B. Connally, Governor of Texas
J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI
Clyde Tolson, Associate Director of the FBI
Cartha DeLoach, Assistant Director of the FBI
William Sullivan, FBI Domestic Intelligence Chief
John McCone, Director of CIA
David Atlee Phillips, CIA disinformation specialist
Chief of Covert Actions, Mexico City in 1963
Stanley Watson, CIA, Chief of Station
The Kennedy family
Admiral George Burkley, MD, White House physician
James J. Rowley, Chief of the Secret Service
Robert Knudsen, White House photographer (who saw autopsy photos)
Jesse Curry, Chief of Police, Dallas Police Department
Roy Kellerman (heard JFK speak after supposed magic bullet)
William Greer (the driver of the Lincoln limousine)
Abraham Bolden, Secret Service, White House detail & Chicago office
John Norris, Secret Service (worked for LBJ; researched case for

decades)

Evelyn Lincoln, JFK's secretary
Richard Goodwin, speechwriter for JFK
Abraham Zapruder, famous home movie photographer
James Tague, struck by a bullet fragment in Dealey Plaza
Hugh Huggins, CIA operative, conducted private investigation for RFK
Sen. Richard Russell, member of the Warren Commission
John J. McCloy, member of the Warren Commission
Bertrand Russell, British mathematician and philosopher
Hugh Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford

University

Michael Foot, British MP
Senator Richard Schweiker, assassinations subcommittee (Church
Committee)

⁴⁴ MCHUGH: I see. Do you agree with the Warren Report on the number of bullets that entered the President's body?

BURKLEY: I would not care to be quoted on that.

<http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/russ/testimony/burkley.htm>

⁴⁵ Fetzer 2000, p. 404.

Also see <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2013/11/19-famous-people-who-believe-jfk-conspiracy.html>.

18. WAGNER: “Let’s be realistic. The discovered rifle [MANTIK: actually, a carbine] was Oswald’s gun.”

MANTIK: Again, it is hard to know where to begin. Almost certainly Oswald did not fire a weapon that day, and it is most unlikely that he owned the Mannlicher-Carcano. The truly diverse arguments for this conclusion are dazzling and overpowering. The reader is referred to the exhaustive work (*Harvey and Lee*) by John Armstrong. Wagner does not even cite Armstrong’s outsized and extraordinary book, which any serious researcher must read. An easier way to begin though is with *Reclaiming Parkland* (2013) by James DiEugenio. In yet one more oversight, DiEugenio’s uniquely incisive and essential book is not cited. And then there is David Josephs,⁴⁷ who has also done heroic work on these issues. But Wagner cites *none* of these authors.

19. WAGNER: “If Oswald fired three shots, as evidenced by many witnesses and buttressed by the appearance of three spent cartridges near the depository’s sixth-floor window, what became of the third bullet?”

MANTIK: Unfortunately, for Wagner, Commission Exhibit 510 shows only *two* (not three) spent cartridges, and *one* live (i.e., unfired) round.⁴⁸ In his End Notes (p. 419), Vincent Bugliosi⁴⁹ admits this even though Wagner does not. Based on WC documents, Bugliosi argues that Will Fritz kept one cartridge (not seen in the photographs!) for further study—even though the FBI was supposedly doing the definitive study at the *same time*. The mortal blow for Wagner, though, is that one of these cartridges was dented. Howard Donahue (a gun expert) believed that this dented shell *could not have been fired*. The gun simply would not have functioned properly.⁵⁰ That leaves only *two* viable pieces of ammunition (including Fritz’s cartridge) for the *three* purported shots. Wagner evades these issues entirely; nonetheless, *his case lives or dies, based on this one defective cartridge*.

20. WAGNER: “The autopsy photographs and X-rays are thus shown to be authentic....”

⁴⁷ <https://kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/oswald-on-november-22-1963>

⁴⁸ https://history-matters.com/archive/jfk/wc/wcvols/wh17/pdf/WH17_CE_510.pdf

⁴⁹ *Reclaiming History* was published in 2007. Wagner admires this book, but my highly unfavorable review is here: <http://assassinationofjfk.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Mantik-Reviews-Bugliosi.pdf>. Soon after my review appeared, Bugliosi telephoned to lecture me for nearly an hour. He finished by telling me that I was the only reviewer (of many) whom he had called, and he advised me to write my own book. Unfortunately, that book appeared just months after his death. In 2011, I also wrote a rather devastating review of his puerile *Divinity of Doubt* (2011): <http://www.assassinationsscience.com/DoubtReview.pdf>.

⁵⁰ *Mortal Error* (1992), by Bonar Menninger, p. 114. I had the pleasure of interviewing Donahue at his home after one of my nine visits to the Archives.

MANTIK: Surely this cannot be true. I have already briefly referenced some problems with the X-rays, but the photographs also pose paradoxes. I have previously listed at least 15 Parkland physicians who explicitly did not recognize the back of the head photograph. In fact, no Parkland physician recognized that image. The seven doctors in the new documentary used words like “altered” and “manipulated” to explain this startling discrepancy. Moreover, the three pathologists did not recognize the “red spot.” And they swore that they had taken photographs of the posterior skull wound—but it was not there.

FBI witness Francis O’Neill, under oath, suggested to the ARRB that an autopsy image had been “doctored.” And Sandra Spencer, who developed some of the original autopsy photographs, stated that the extant prints are not on the type of photographic paper that she had used. She had even brought with her (to the deposition) a photograph on the type of paper that she had used in that era—so that a direct comparison could be made.⁵¹

More to the point, at the Archives, Robert Groden and I have both been struck by the lack of a stereo effect for the back of JFK’s head—precisely where the witnesses saw the large occipital defect. This can only mean that the exact same image appears in that location on *both* stereo photographs, but this can only occur if the *identical* image was *deliberately imprinted* into that same anatomic site on *both* photographic partners. After all, it could not occur by chance. Furthermore, Groden and I did not see such a bizarre effect anywhere else in the autopsy collection—only there, where the huge defect was located.⁵² How likely then is it that such an image (of an intact posterior skull) is authentic—an image that *no Parkland doctor recalled*?

But to finally wrap up the proof, here it is. While at the Archives, I spotted what everyone else had missed on JFK’s back (of the torso): two supposedly partner photographs of JFK’s back *are distinctly different*.⁵³ In Wagner’s Figure P.3, identify the left-sided spot, near the ruler, at the level of the scapular spine. This spot is distinctly different in the two partner photographs⁵⁴ at the Archives. For discussion of these images, see my online lecture for JFK Lancer in 2009.⁵⁵ In the real world, that can never occur. After all, these paired photographs were

⁵¹ Cf. https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/Featured_ARRB_Medical_Interviews.html?search=O%27Neill.

⁵² While at the Archives, I performed stereo viewing of the transparencies, the color prints, and the black and white prints—in all sorts of combinations. They all yielded the same results.

⁵³ In one photograph, this dark spot appears as in Wagner’s Figure P.3, while in the partner photograph the spot is much, much lighter, and has a horizontal line drawn through it! Of course, the latter image is not in the public domain.

⁵⁴ The original generation consists of 4 x 5-inch transparencies. Each autopsy view includes at least two nearly identical photographs, typically taken seconds (and inches) apart. Such a pair permits stereo viewing. At the Archives, I used my own stereo viewer.

⁵⁵ https://www.assassinationsscience.com/JFK_Skull_X-rays.htm.

supposedly taken within seconds of one another. The universe does not play such visual tricks on innocent bystanders without human interference. In fact, this discrepancy meets a criterion from Gerald McDonnell's list—something impossible has happened. The bottom line is this: if such different images (of this dark spot) exist in the official collection, then someone deliberately altered one of those photographs (it is not the publicly available one)—and that means that the other autopsy photographs now also become suspect. Almost certainly therefore, the intact back of the head photograph must be one of those altered images.⁵⁶ After all, leaving it in its original state would have screamed conspiracy. For the US government in 1963, that was intolerable.

Conclusion

Wagner's book left me almost breathless, as well as thoroughly mystified—for its naivety, for its somber witlessness, for its colossal logical flaws, and for its conspicuous omissions. The author reports no original research, and he admits to no witness interviews. Rather, he assumes that armchair speculation alone (à la Mycroft Holmes, but without the mental agility) is sufficient to unveil the Truth. For the most complex and bewildering case in history, that is truly guileless. The entire landscape in this case is everywhere littered with manipulated evidence, lost evidence, altered evidence, and misleading clues. If this rubbish dump goes unrecognized (as it does in Wagner's book), accurate conclusions will remain forever locked inside one of Hawking's black holes. Wagner has thus unintentionally offered an example nonpareil of precisely what won't work in this case. In the interest of halting public deception, this book should be banned from the market—or else placed in the fiction section of the library, along with the Warren Report. I only wish I could be kinder, but I do believe in second chances. Perhaps Wagner wishes to re-study the case for a few years, with a little less gullibility, and write a more accurate book?

APPENDIX: A BLUNT RESPONSE (Dec 4, 2017)

David,

I took a look at the Wagner review and would make the following comments on the bit quoting me. The encounter with Pete Bagley was not an interview. We met on a regular basis over five or so years, more a series of conversations based on mutual respect and understanding. I had mentioned to Pete that his Soviet Division was cut out of the original Oswald defection dissemination, and he asked me for the documents on that.

⁵⁶ It is also striking that the camera used in the morgue on November 22, 1963 is not consistent with the autopsy photographs: <http://www.jfkhistory.com/aguilas.html>.

These documents were NOT collected by the SRS. They were put together by me over a number of years and consisted of CIA memos, HSCA researcher notes, and the handwritten notes taken from Office of Security Chief Gambino's testimony to the HSCA. When this material is put together it's clear that the Security Office subverted the Oswald documents coming into CIA from other government agencies (State, ONI, OSI, et al.) so that the Oswald information was kept close to the Security Research Staff and their linked component CI/SIG.

After viewing the documentation, Pete suddenly said "OK, was he (meaning Oswald) witting or unwitting?" This statement came as a surprise and I was flummoxed, and I said to Pete, "You can't ask me that question. How would I know?" But he insisted, "No, you have to know." When I guessed at "unwitting," Pete's response was, "Oh no, he would have to be witting." At the time it seemed no big deal to me. I think I felt that Pete was speaking hypothetically, although he did not qualify his statement. Thereafter we moved on to other subject matter. It's also important to know that in order to exclude the Soviet Division from the Oswald defection material the SRS (Security Research Staff) would have to request what was ostensibly single channel dissemination from Mail Logistics. They were part of the OCR, Office of Central Reference, which was within the DDI (Directorate of Intelligence) at that time. In other words, you had to make your request to the dissemination component, fill up a form (1604 or similar). In order to capture the Oswald information, the request had to be made prior to defection.

With apologies for the technical stuff, best regards,

Malcolm [Blunt]