

Michael Baden's Deceptions

By Milicent Cranor

How far would Michael Baden go to deceive the public on the matter of the Kennedy assassination? As you can see from the samples I've taken from his book, *Unnatural Death: Confessions of a Medical Examiner* (Random House, 1989), Baden — formerly Head of the House Select Committee on Assassinations Medical Panel — went far beyond making the usual misleading statements. He must have had great faith in Allen Dulles's comment: "But nobody reads. Don't believe people read in this county. There will be a few professors that will read the record...the public will read very little." To those involved in what the CIA calls "perception management," reality seems to be just a rough draft.

If people like Baden feel free to lie about what is on public record, imagine the reliability of "information" they provide that can't be verified.

The Harper Fragment

"The fourth [fragment]... was found a few days after the autopsy by a premed student... He took it home to his father, a doctor, who knew what it was and had it photographed. At a party, the photographer couldn't resist talking about it, and the story got back to the FBI. Agents swooped down on the premed student, who was saving the fragment as a souvenir." [P.17]

(1) According to FBI documents found by Dr. Josiah Thompson, the Harpers behaved quite responsibly. Billy Harper took the fragment to his uncle, Dr. Jack Harper who quickly took it to Methodist Hospital where it was examined by the chief pathologist, A.B. Cairns, and photographed. On the following Monday, 11/25/64, Dr. Harper turned the fragment over to the FBI. [7 HSCA 24] The FBI retrieved photos of the bone from Mrs. Harper 7/10/64. [7 HSCA 122]

(2) In Dallas, the bone was identified as occipital (back of head) but, as noted by author David Lifton, photos of the bone (the bone itself is missing) were said by the HSCA to show parietal bone (front of head). As first noted by Thompson, a blown-out fragment from the back of the head suggests a shot from the front.

Why would Baden want to discredit the Harpers? Have the archived photos of this fragment ever been authenticated by anyone who actually saw the bone fragment itself?

Kennedy's Head Wound

"Perhaps the most egregious error was the four-inch miscalculation. The head is only five

inches long from crown to neck, but Humes was confused by a little piece of brain tissue that had adhered to the scalp. He placed the head wound four inches lower than it actually was, near the neck instead of the cowlick." [p16]

(1) Baden neglects to mention that Humes told him, "the wound on the SKULL precisely coincided with" the piece of tissue adhering to the scalp. [7 HSCA 251]

(2) Baden implies the autopsists never lifted up the scalp to examine the bone beneath, an absurdity comparable to not removing a victim's clothing during an autopsy.

(3) Baden implies that only one pathologist was involved, instead of three: Humes, Boswell and Finck.

(4) Baden implies that a calculation (more opportunity for error) instead of a simple direct measurement resulted in this monumental discrepancy.

(5) Baden neglects to mention how the location was based on an easy-to-see fixed reference point, the external occipital protuberance.

(5) Baden implies that Humes did not know the top of the head from the bottom.

Four inches is quite a chunk of real estate on the human head. Property disputes have been based on less. No matter how inexperienced the autopsists were, it is hard to believe they could make such a mistake. It is easier to believe the wound was revised because, on hindsight, it seemed inconsistent with a shot from the sixth floor of the Depository building.

When the Army "duplicated" the assassination by shooting at reconstructed skulls, the bullet entered where Humes said it did, but it did not exit where it was supposed to according to the FINAL autopsy report, the top right side of the head. The bullet came out of the right eye, where it was supposed to — apparently according to a different autopsy report.

There may have been an earlier plan to solve the problem of the trajectory by revising the EXIT wound. Dr. Alfred Olivier who supervised the Army experiments testified before the Warren Commission that "according to the autopsy the bullet emerged through the superorbital process." [5 WCH 89] He was referring to the bony ridge beneath one's brow.

By this time, people knew that Kennedy's face was outwardly intact. (The bone beneath the right brow was fractured.) No bullet could have exited from anywhere near his eye. Possibly this is why a different location for an exit was decided upon.

Incredibly, Arlen Specter did not ask, What autopsy report was that? Nor did he show the least concern about Olivier's photo of the experimental skull with the right side of the face missing, even though this obviously did not resemble Kennedy's wounds. (It's very interesting that, because of over-penetration, Kennedy's A-P x-ray seems to show the same area missing.) Specter changed the subject to the entrance wound. There may or may not be a connection but, four years later, Kennedy got a new entrance wound in his head.

Front Seat Fragments

"The Kennedy head bullet was found on the floor of Kennedys car in front. It had struck the windshield strut and broken in two." [p13]

(1) This contradicts what Baden says on page 14 of HSCA Volume 1: "This bullet fragmented after entering the cranium, one major piece of it passing forward and laterally to produce an explosive fracture of the right side of the skull as it emerged from the head."

(2) The Army experiments did not include placing something behind the skulls to duplicate the windshield strut. The bullets supposedly broke on the skulls themselves.

(3) Baden neglects to mention how, in 1968, a 6.5mm metal fragment magically appeared imbedded in the new location of the entrance wound (in x-rays), or how it supposedly got there: when the bullet broke upon entering the skull. But then he would have to explain how the autopsists and radiologists who saw fine, dustlike particles on unenhanced x-rays could miss a big 6.5mm fragment in the back of the head.

Something seems to be seriously wrong with the story of these fragments, but what is it? The nose portion was a torn copper jacket containing lead; the tail, a piece of empty jacket. But Dr. John Lattimer, who often claimed it was easy to separate the lead core from the jacket of a Carcano bullet, reported the fragments to be a hunk of lead without a jacket, and an empty jacket, which was what his own experiments produced, and what he claimed (with no reference) the Army's experiments produced. [Resid Staff Phys 1972;18:34; Surg, Gynecol Obstet 1976; 42:246] I found no detailed description of those Army experiment fragments but, judging from photos, only one seems jacketed.

Should a Carcano bullet fragment under the presumed circumstances into two jacketed fragments? Was the small, neat entrance wound consistent with the sort of violent interaction

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He repeatedly expressed the view that both the FBI and CIA had concealed important material from the Commission, and that the CIA/Mafia plots would have had a "very direct bearing on the areas of conspiracy which we tried to pursue." He also asked, "Are you looking into the plots on the basis of whether they were covered up by the CIA because some of the very people involved in them could have been involved in the President's assassination?" I said that yes that was an area of our investigation, and he replied strongly, "Good. Good. You have to look at it that way." I also said that we were looking into charges that Castro might have retaliated for the plots by killing Kennedy, and he replied, "Where is any evidence of that? I think the other approach would be much more logical." This was apparently in reference to probing those involved in the plots themselves.

I told him that we would of course make extensive material available to him in reference to our questioning of him, noting that we want him to refresh his memory as to his old memos, etc. as well as other documents that we will give him in advance. He was very appreciative of this and said he would like to know more about the CIA/Mafia plots and our work on them.

He remarked a couple times that he has nothing to regret about his work on the Commission, and that he tried his hardest to make it the best investigation possible. He said he still believes very strongly that he had a good staff of the finest legal minds. He did of course say that the agency cooperation and input (FBI and CIA) was and is the key issue to him.

He also again said that he would like an opportunity to review the testimony of other WC staffers before he comes down. I again stated, more strongly this time, that I thought that this would probably not be in accordance with Committee rules. He said he "would appreciate the courtesy."

Again, he seemed quite friendly throughout the conversation and seemed to look forward to meeting with us. ☩

Baden

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that would break this kind of bullet? Would such a collision drive the head very much forward? How much energy would be expended, and would this affect the jet effect? When physicist Luis Alvarez fired at melons with super fast bullets (3000 ft/sec versus Carcano's 1800 ft/sec impact velocity) to "prove" the jet effect, did any of those bullets break upon striking the occipital region of the melons?

Head Movement

"Since the head moved backward, they said, JFK was shot from the front... This theory is not unreasonable; it's just wrong. They left out of their calculations the acceleration of the car Kennedy was riding in." [p7]

- (1) Only Kennedy's head moves backward.
- (2) The car doesn't accelerate until later.

Kennedy's Back Wound

"The X-rays and photographs show the wound to be lower on the back and the track slightly upward." [p14]

True. And in HSCA Volume 1, page 196, he said, "In the jacket and the underlying shirt there is a perforation of the fabric that corresponds directly with the location of the perforation of the skin of the right upper back..." Yet, in 1988, on *Nova*, Baden said the track is upward only if Kennedy had been upright, that Kennedy, therefore, was leaning forward when shot. But the Zapruder film shows Kennedy WAS upright and already reacting when the magic bullet is supposed to have struck him for the first time, along with Governor Connally.

Connally's Back Wound

"According to Connally's medical records, the bullet struck him nose first in the back and left a vertical scar. I thought the records were wrong. If it was the same magic bullet, it would have gone in sideways with the length, not the point, first. After leaving Kennedy, it would have lost its power and become a tumbling bullet, and tumbling bullets rotate. When they finally strike, they strike edgewise. I needed to exam-

ined Connally... He removed his shirt. There it was—a *two inch long* sideways entrance scar in his back. He had not been shot by a second shooter but by the same flattened bullet that went through Kennedy" (emphasis added) [p20].

(1) As any physician knows, the size of a scar does not necessarily indicate the original size of a wound.

(2) Connally's thoracic surgeon, Dr. Robert Shaw, testified to the Warren Commission, on four different occasions, that the wound was only 1.5 centimeters [4 WCH 104, 6 WCH 85,86], and was enlarged to 3cm [4 WCH 88]

(3) The size was indirectly confirmed by the FBI's measurements of the hole in Connally's clothes: Back of shirt: 5/8 x 4/8 inch. Back of jacket: 5/8 x 3/8 of an inch [5 WCH 64]

(4) From HSCA Volume 7, p. 326: "[T]he ragged edges of the wound were surgically cut away, effectively enlarging it to approximately 3 cm."

(5) From HSCA Volume 7, p.143: "Dr. Baden localized these wounds as follows: [A]t the site of gunshot perforation of the right upper back there is now a 1 1/8 inches long horizontal pale, well healed scar that is up to three-eighths inch wide..."

Here, Baden has outdone John Lattimer. Lattimer published the report of Connally's operation which describes the size of the wound as 3cm, but this was after enlargement, as explained over and over again by Dr. Shaw. Lattimer also cropped testimony and a diagram to give the false impression of a sideways hit. [Med Times 1974; 102:33] Some people stretch the truth, but Baden has stretched a lie.

What revisions will the future bring? ☩

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