

BY FAX AND U.S. MAIL

November 10, 1997

Mr. Harrison E. Livingstone  
3025 Abell Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dear Mr. Livingstone:

Thank you for your letter of November 5, which I just received. I will do my best to address the concerns that you raise in the letter.

In my opinion, medical and autopsy records are generally the most important records for understanding any homicide. I certainly believe that such is the case for the assassination of President Kennedy. Because of this belief, I decided to take two steps to further the public's legitimate right to understand the circumstances of President Kennedy's death. The first was to make sure that *all* of the medical-related evidence from prior investigations (except the deed-of-gift material that is statutorily excluded from our mandate) was released. As far as I know, *all* of that material has now been opened in full. (If you are aware of any relevant records that have not yet been released, please let me know so that I can attend to the issue personally.)

The second step that I took was to attempt, to the best of my ability, to clarify outstanding issues related to the autopsy. As you well know, there are numerous questions that have arisen regarding the autopsy and records from the autopsy. We have brought to the National Archives many of the persons associated with that activity and have asked pointed questions about the photographs and x-rays in the Archives. I am attempting to be as open-minded, fair, and conscientious as I can with regard to these issues.

I had originally *hoped* to release the records last year. I certainly *never* promised to release them by any particular date. I found that the inquiry broadened in scope as it continued and that we ultimately questioned many more witnesses than I had anticipated when we began. (In fact, we were involved in a major activity only last week that consumed several days of staff work.) I believed that it is better to follow the evidence than to stop at an arbitrary date.

Mr. Harrison E. Livingstone  
November 10, 1997  
Page 2

Of course, we could have let the information dribble out as we proceeded. Or, we could keep the information confidential until we had interviewed all witnesses and completed our inquiry. By delaying the release until the inquiry is completed, we have the ability to go back to a witness and re-examine him before the information is released. I believe that this is the preferable way to conduct an inquiry of this sort. Witnesses should be uninformed about what other witnesses have said. I believe that this helps keep the record clearer and more honest. If this decision is to be faulted, then I am the responsible party.

We have had a few requests, such as yours, to permit special early access to the information we have collected. I am sure that you can understand how we could not fairly choose from among different researchers and provide privileged access to the materials. Accordingly, I cannot agree to give you access to material, regardless of your willingness to keep the information confidential from other researchers.

I am fully aware that there is a great deal of interest in the record we are compiling. I can assure you that *all* of the autopsy-related information that we are collecting (again, with the exception of the off-limits deed-of-gift material) will be made available in whole and without redaction prior to the time that we go out of business. I personally am working to attempt to accomplish this sooner than later. At the time that the information is released, I will be sure to notify you personally so that you will have access on the very day that the material is released.

I hope that this sufficiently answers your questions and I appreciate your patience.

Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn  
Executive Director