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Mr. Stephen Tilley
Archivist
National Archives at College Park
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6926

Dear Steve,

I hope all is well with you, Steve. I write to ask you for more help with a project you helped me with almost five years ago. It pertains to Warren Commission Exhibit #399.

CE 399 is the bullet that the Commission concluded had been found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital in Dallas after the assassination. It is the bullet that was said to have caused all the non-fatal injuries sustained by both President Kennedy and Governor John Connally.

On June 12, 1999, I wrote you asking for help locating any FBI 302s that might exist reporting on the Bureau's investigation of #399's chain of possession. (Enclosure #1) On July 16, 1999 Stuart Culy wrote me back and sent me records which I'd already obtained and he informed me that "no FBI #302's were found on this subject" and that "the serial numbers on the FBI documents ... run concurrently, with no gaps, which indicates that no material is missing from this file." (Enclosure #2)

Mr. Culy's response was about as unequivocal and definitive as it gets, and yet I write again because if Mr. Culy is right, and I have no reason to suppose he is not, we are left with an unresolved conflict in the FBI records on what some consider to be the single most important piece of evidence in the case. Allow me to elaborate as briefly as I can.

Responding to a Commission request to run down #399's chain of possession, the Bureau wrote a letterhead memo on July 7, 1964, which was published as Commission Exhibit #2011. In that memo, the Bureau reported that FBI Special Agent Bardwell Odum showed Exhibit C1 [which is what it was called before it was entered into Commission evidence as #399] to Parkland Hospital witnesses, Darrell Tomlinson and O.P. Wright, who found the bullet originally. CE #2011 reports that these Parkland witnesses told Agent Odum that #399 "looks like the slug found at Parkland Hospital on November 22, 1963."

The same memo, however, reports that FBI Special Agent Elmer Todd showed #399 to both Secret Service Agent Richard Johnsen (sic) and the head of the US Secret Service, James Rowley, the next two men in the bullet's chain of possession. CE #2011 reports only that both "could not identify" #399 as the one they received on 11/22/63.

It is all but certain that both Odum and Todd submitted 302's after their interviews with the Parkland witnesses and the Secret Service Agents. The 7/7/64 memo is clearly not a 302 and the only other documents behind the 7/7/64 memo are memos from the FBI's Dallas SAC (Special Agent in Charge) to WFO (FBI's Washington Field Office) on 6/20/64 (Enclosure # 3) and one from the SAC, WFO to the FBI Director and SAC, Dallas on 6/24/64. (Enclosure #4)

Coming as it does from the Dallas SAC, the 6/20/64 memo is obviously not Bardwell Odum's 302. More importantly, the 6/20/64 memo actually contradicts the FBI's 7/7/64 memo to the Commission. For the 6/20/64 memo stated that, rather than seeing a resemblance between #399 and the bullet found on 11/22/63, "neither DARRELL C. TOMLINSON ... nor O. P. WRIGHT ... can identify bullet" Period. No comment appears in this, the earliest and only memo pertaining to an FBI interview with Tomlinson and Wright, about either witness having said there was a resemblance.

Similarly, the 6/24/64 memo from WFO's SAC to J. Edgar Hoover is obviously not Agent Elmer Todd's 302. Here, however, there is no contradiction between the 6/24/64 memo and the 7/7/64 memo; both state that both Secret Service Agents Johnsen and Rowley "were unable to identify" #399.

The reason I continue to pursue this is because I've stumbled across more information that tends to support the 6/20/64 and 6/24/64 memos and undermine the Bureau's assurances to the Warren Commission in the 7/7/64 memo about there being a resemblance between bullets.

First off, in his 1967 book, "Six Seconds in Dallas," author Josiah Thompson recounted an interview with O.P. Wright. He wrote, "I then showed him (Wright) photographs of CE's 399, 572 (the two ballistics comparison rounds from Oswald's rifle) (sic), and 606 (revolver bullets) (sic), and he rejected all of these as resembling the bullet Tomlinson found on the stretcher. Half an hour later in the presence of two witnesses, he once again rejected the picture of 399 as resembling the bullet found on the stretcher."¹ (Enclosure #5)

Secondly, with Thompson's help, I located retired FBI agent Odum and sent him the relevant files. In a phone interview he told me that he'd never interviewed either Tomlinson or Wright about #399 and that, in fact, he'd never even seen #399. Surprised at his response, Thompson and I traveled to the Dallas suburb where Odum lives and interviewed him in his home. Again, he said he had never interviewed either Tomlinson or Wright and that he'd never seen #399. Following up, I asked if it is possible that after all these years he might have forgotten those interviews. He said he doubts he would ever have forgotten investigating so important a piece of evidence, but that even if he had done it and forgotten about it, he would certainly have submitted a 302, which seems perfectly sensible.

And so, even after Stuart Culy's detailed efforts on our behalf, Thompson and I are left wondering if somehow, somewhere there might be a couple of 302's that are still lying around in some still undiscovered, dusty file. There should be 302's backing up the FBI's June memos – one from Agent Bardwell Odum and one from Agent Elmer Todd.

I've included copies of the relevant files and correspondence that might help you look without repeating steps you've already graciously taken. If you can find no 302's, can you help us determine with any certainty whether any ever existed? If no 302s can be found, would pursuing this with the FBI be of any help? We tried that initially, and were referred by the Bureau to you and are now at a dead end with what we have.

Thanks in advance for any guidance you may be able to provide.

Sincerely yours,

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¹ Thompson, Josiah. Six Seconds in Dallas. New York: *Bernard Geis Associates* for *Random House*, 1967, p. 175.