

THE THIRD DECADE

LT. CMDR. WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER

by

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I have attempted to investigate the death of Lt. C-dr. William Bruce Pitzer, who died of a gunshot wound at his office in the Bethesda Naval Hospital on October 29, 1966. According to a Naval Corpsman present at the JFK autopsy, Dennis David, Pitzer had photographed the autopsy; and David also offered the "information" that, although the death was supposedly a suicide, the suicide weapon was found in his right hand, even though he was left handed (interview of David with Art Peterson in Waukegan, Illinois News-Sun, May 1, 1976). I have shared David's suspicion that Pitzer was in fact murdered, perhaps as part of the coverup in the death of President Kennedy, his death in Bethesda Hospital having been meant as a warning to the other witnesses in that hospital. Apparently Pitzer's family also has some of these suspicions.

On January 21, 1988, I spoke at length with the widow of Bruce Pitzer; she stated that she was unable to obtain the autopsy report. Mrs. Pitzer stated that her husband was present at the autopsy of President John F. Kennedy at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he was stationed. He was an Assistant Director of Inservice TV his last eleven years in the Navy. She stated that she was told that he filmed the autopsy proceedings. This is of the greatest importance. She said he never talked much about his work and that she did not know the whole story. Mrs. Pitzer said that she was visited by Naval Intelligence who asked her never to talk to anyone about her husband's death. She was nervous to talk to me about it, but clearly remains concerned about what happened and evidently felt that it ought to be investigated.

The death was said to be a suicide, but his widow says that it simply could not have happened that way. She says that he was not a suicide type and that they had a good life together. He had been offered a job teaching at Montgomery Jr. College upon his impending retirement; and he had a very close relationship with his sons, and would not have let them all down by taking his life. Suicide was far from his personality. She said that he left notes to her for every little thing, and there was no suicide note. They were to attend a party he looked forward to.

Mrs. Pitzer said that, contrary to the statement by Dennis David to Art Peterson, her husband was not left handed but right handed, and that David's tale of the gun being found in the wrong hand is completely fabricated. She said that his left hand was so badly mangled by whatever happened to him that he had on military gloves at his funeral, and they were unable to remove the wedding ring to give to her. The Surgeon General (Admiral Brown) and other top brass attended his funeral. His widow saw his body and closed the coffin.

According to the widow, Pitzer began as an X-ray technician in the service and was stationed in the Pacific. He did not own a gun, but during 11 secret trips in the last year of his life, he was given a handgun with blanks to carry. She does not know what kind of gun it was. She says that he was greatly disturbed over JFK's death.

On February 5, 1988, I spoke to both Dr. James J. Humes and Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, the U.S. Naval officers who conducted the autopsy in the death of President Kennedy. Among other things, I asked the doctors about their knowledge of Pitzer. When asked about the death of Pitzer in Bethesda hospital, both doctors became hostile. "What business is that of yours?" Dr. Humes demanded. Years ago the author had spoken with Dr. Humes on two occasions, once for about an hour, and once for a half hour. During all of that time, Dr. Humes would not discuss a single issue of fact.