

Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump
Final Report of Findings and Recommendations
December 5, 2024

Views of Rep. Clay Higgins

As a Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, and the House Armed Services Committee, my efforts to investigate the actions and circumstances surrounding the July 13, 2024, assassination attempt of President-elect Donald J. Trump began prior to the establishment of the Task Force on July 24, 2024.

I participated in the Oversight Committee's July 22 hearing on the assassination attempt with former Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle as well as the Homeland Security Committee's hearing on the same topic with a representative of the Pennsylvania State Police on July 23.

My efforts as a part of the Task Force's investigation included participation in Task Force hearings, several briefings, the transcribed interview of the Secret Service counter sniper who fired the shot killing would-be assassin Thomas Crooks, the Task Force's visit to the FBI laboratory in Quantico, Virginia, and extensive review of documents and conversations with Task Force Members and staff.

I also supported the work of the Task Force through independent investigative efforts. This included visits to Western Pennsylvania where I assessed the site of the July 13 assassination attempt, spoke individually with members of local law enforcement who provided security at the rally, visited the gun range frequented by shooter Thomas Crooks, and spoke to the attorney representing Crooks' parents. I procured ammunition of the types fired by both the local SWAT Operator and Secret Service counter sniper in the moments after Crooks fired on President-elect Trump and the crowd attending the rally in Butler, Pennsylvania to support further ballistic analysis efforts. My investigative report sent to the Task Force on August 12 is included after the conclusion of these additional views.

The Task Force's Final Report on Findings and Recommendations represents a commendable effort to investigate and reach conclusions that all Members of the Task Force could support. Within the limited timeframe for investigation, as determined by the House of Representatives, the Final Report provides a thorough accounting and analysis of the Secret Service security failures that nearly allowed a 20-year-old to succeed in his assassination attempt. I also strongly agree with the information in the Final Report that outlines the obstruction the Task Force encountered from federal agencies in gaining access to all relevant documents, witnesses, and evidence. Full cooperation from federal agencies could have provided answers to many outstanding questions of public importance about what happened in Butler as well as the second assassination attempt on September 15 in West Palm Beach, Florida.

These additional views, provided to the Task Force's Final Report to the House of Representatives, focus on information to enhance public understanding of what happened in

Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13, 2024—particularly as it applies to the rapid exchange of gunfire that occurred at 6:11 p.m. These views include information obtained by the Task Force that I would have preferred to be included in the final, unanimously approved report, along with other areas for future investigation of what occurred on July 13.

Second, I outline my view about Security Service security failures. While I agree with the findings of the Task Force about mistakes made at the July 13 rally, my own assessment of the security failure places more emphasis on the individual failures of agents to execute assignments than on the pre-rally planning.

Sequence and investigation of shots

1. Analysis of Shots Fired

Local law enforcement stopped Crooks. Secret Service killed him. The Task Force’s Final Report notes this as a possibility, but a review of all available evidence supports this conclusion. The ninth shot of July 13, fired by a local SWAT Operator serving as a lead of the Butler Emergency Services Unit (ESU) counterassault (CAT) team at the rally (hereinafter, SWAT Operator), caused would-be-assassin Thomas Crooks to stop firing at President-elect Trump and the Butler rally crowd. His shot setup the delayed but successful kill shot by a Secret Service counter-sniper. The record of evidence and my investigative conversations with relevant local law enforcement officers, while not yet definitive, corroborates testimony that this ninth shot impacted Crooks: specifically, evidence suggests it struck the buttstock of Crooks’ rifle.

The SWAT Operator was positioned at Building 16, the northernmost barn behind the stage.¹ From Building 16, he could see the fence line of the AGR buildings (where Crooks shot from).² He had been on-notice of Crooks since approximately 4:00-4:20 p.m. when a local law enforcement colleague informed him that “there were a few guys [...] outside the perimeter that were just acting weird” by the AGR buildings.³ These three individuals wearing gray, yellow, and red shirts appeared to be “playing cat and mouse with the property owner,” who would chase them off the fence line.⁴ He told his colleague to “keep eyes”—though “[t]hat wasn’t even his job to do so. He just took it upon himself.”⁵

The gray shirt—Crooks—would come towards the AGR fence line and back away. The SWAT Operator did not see anything in Crooks’ hands at that point, and Crooks later disappeared from his view until 6:11 p.m. Both local law enforcement officers worked to convince Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and Sheriff’s office personnel to try to interact with the three suspicious individuals.⁶ The SWAT Operator testified he repeatedly asked for law enforcement to

¹ SWAT Operator, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview Before the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 13 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

² *Id.* at 26.

³ *Id.* at 23.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 25.

⁶ *Id.* at 28.

engage with the suspicious individuals, and at around 6:10 p.m. or minutes before, “finally, we [got] a couple cruisers to go over there.”⁷ He observed officers walking in front of the shooter’s building.⁸ He saw them “bouncing back and forth on each side [...] looking for something.”⁹

Crooks reappeared in the SWAT Operator’s view after he had already fired three shots from a self-supported prone position at the ridge/peak of an AGR complex building 150 yards from his target, President-elect Trump. The following describes the SWAT Operator’s reaction to Crooks, in addition to a timeline of the ten gunshots occurring all within a 16 second window according to my own audio-video lab study.

The First Three Shots

Gunshot	Time after 1st shot	Time between shots
Shot #1	0.00 seconds	N/A
Shot #2	0.85 seconds	0.85 seconds
Shot #3	1.55 seconds	0.69 seconds

Crooks’ first shot struck President-elect Trump in his right ear, and Crooks’ second shot was fired .85 seconds later, followed by his third shot fired 1.55 seconds after his first shot. Then, President-elect Trump went down as he was swarmed and covered by Secret Service Agents—changing target access for Crooks. Crooks, ever determined, adjusted his aim downwards a bit and into the now covered target in the next 2.8 seconds as he prepared to fire his fourth shot.

At 6:11 p.m. the SWAT Operator was positioned roughly fifty feet in front of Building 16.¹⁰ He heard “[on] the roof” and the call for deployment on his radio.¹¹ He instructed his colleague—who was co-located with him—to “...go, go, go.”¹² Immediately after that exchange, he testified he heard the first three shots: “[c]rack, crack, crack.”¹³ He further testified he asked himself “[o]kay, where we at here?”¹⁴ Then, he “[happened] to look up, and that’s when [he saw] Crooks. I got his head, his shoulders, and I could see a rifle.”¹⁵ He testified “if I’m Crooks and straight ahead is the candidate, I was kind of like off to his 11 o’clock.”¹⁶ In his transcribed interview with the Task Force, the SWAT Operator marked his location in front of Building 16 with an ‘X’. He also marked the location of Crooks on the AGR building’s roof with an ‘X’, indicating that he was approximately 115 yards away from Crooks.¹⁷

⁷ *Id.* at 30.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.* at 30-31.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 26.

¹¹ *Id.* at 31.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.* at 36.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 75.



The Next Five Shots

Gunshot	Time after 1st shot	Time between shots
Shot #4	4.34 seconds	2.79 seconds
Shot #5	4.60 seconds	0.27 seconds
Shot #6	4.78 seconds	0.18 seconds
Shot #7	4.96 seconds	0.18 seconds
Shot #8	5.12 seconds	0.16 seconds

Crooks shots 1, 2 and 3 were carefully fired in 1.55 seconds at a standing, clear line of sight target, President-elect Trump. Then, after adjusting aim, Crooks fired shots 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. SWAT Operator testified he only heard the first three shots, but saw Crooks fire his fourth and subsequent bullets:

- **Crooks' fourth shot.** After the SWAT Operator first saw Crooks, he heard “another crack” and started “pulling his weapon up.”¹⁹
- **Crooks' fifth, sixth, and seventh shots.** While the SWAT Operator acquired the target through his red dot scope on his rifle, he testified he could “see the gas emit from [Crooks'] barrel, [Crooks'] muzzle.”²⁰
- **Crooks' eighth shot.** After the SWAT Operator observed the gas emitting from Crooks' weapon, he heard Crooks' last shot of his second volley.²¹

¹⁸ *Id.* at Majority Exhibit 1.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 31.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.* at 31-32.

The Ninth Shot – Crooks is stopped

Gunshot	Time after 1st shot	Time between shots
Shot #9	5.89 seconds	0.77 seconds

After Crooks' eighth and final shot, the SWAT Operator testified he tried to aim "for the lower part of [Crooks'] head so it gave me more room to work with if I did pull a shot -- up, down, left, right. I didn't want to send the round over his head, obviously, into wherever. I'd rather shoot low on him and, you know, worst case scenario hit the roof. Either skip it up or, you know, get him down below. Throat, mouth, you know."²² He fired, and Crooks "immediately goes down."²³ He testified:

When I say he goes down, it wasn't like he was ducking to get out of the way. I mean, like, I know I hit him. Like there's no doubt about it. He goes down. He kind of jerks to the right, and then he kind of slumps over slowly and then kind of slowly rolls backwards out of my field of view.²⁴

So when I engaged [...] from the angle, it hit his low right [...] I could see his body twitch [...] I'm like, "Okay, good. I got him." Throat, neck, something, shoulder. You know, whatever. And, like I said, he kind of rolled up. It looked like he was trying to recover. He was struggling. I'm like, okay, you know, maybe it was his neck. Maybe it was his shoulder. He was having a hard time coming back up.²⁵

You know, he wasn't trying to reposition because if he would reposition, he just would have got down and moved, you know. But he wasn't doing that. He was trying to like – it seemed like he was trying to, like, push himself up on his shoulders or whatever, his arms. And, obviously, if it was hit, you know, you're not going to be able to move real good, you know, pushing on your right shoulder if your right shoulder is hit. But, yeah, that was -- that was that.²⁶

He clarified his certainty of hitting Crooks:

I knew I hit him, too, because, like I said, you know, I'm prior service military, so I have combat experience. His demeanor was not -- like,

²² *Id.* at 34.

²³ *Id.* at 32.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.* at 36-37.

²⁶ *Id.* at 37.

he was definitely disrupted or hit, you know. So it wasn't like him getting out of the way. He wasn't ducking, trying to reposition. Like he went down.²⁷

[With] my past, you know, being in the service, law enforcement, fire instructor, all that stuff, I know I'm very familiar with a weapon. I'm very good with weapons. And like I know -- so when I engaged, my reticle never left Crooks' body, even after my --even after I shot, so I didn't have to realign --my dot never left his body, my target. And, again, which basically verified that my muzzle never would have left that target area.

Then it was his reaction. Again, like, when you hear a bullet fly over your head past your head -- again, I've experienced it. At first --that very first time, it's like -- you're like, "Oh, holy jeez." Like, you're ducking. You're getting out of the way. There could be more coming, you know. You're not going to just get out of the way once and, like, that's going to be it. You're going to get out of the way. Take cover. You know, get down. Like I said, he had no urgency.

When I hit, like I said, there was that jerking motion. Like, you know, it was more like on the right side, like he kind of like jerked down to my left, his right. And, like I said, then he slowly rolled like he just had no strength, whatever, and kind of slowed -- slowly rolled over, you know, off to his right side. He then kind of like then rolled out of my -- rolled down the hill, like, you know, down the roof. Not rolled down, but just kind of went down outside of my view.²⁸

The SWAT Operator had raised his non-magnified standard issue M4 AR platform SWAT rifle, stabilized his target through the EOTECH red-dot sight, and fired shot number nine, 5.89 seconds after the first shot, just 0.77 seconds after Crooks had fired his eighth shot. The SWAT Operator's ninth shot impacted Crooks by striking the MAGPUL high-density plastic upper buttstock of Crooks' rifle, shattering a large plastic section of the MAGPUL stock and causing an explosion of shrapnel as the broken stock smashed into Crooks' right neck and jaw area below his right ear. The ninth shot stopped Crooks, causing him to lower his elbow-supported prone firing position and back away from the AGR building roof ridge-line by several feet.

SWAT Operator Attempts to Fire Again

Crooks recovered from the impact and injury of the ninth shot, and over the course of 10.1 seconds, Crooks regained a prone self-supported firing position, now several feet further away and

²⁷ *Id.* at 34.

²⁸ *Id.* at 72-73.

lower in profile from the SWAT Operator, who had remained focused on target through his EOTECH sight since the ninth shot. Although Crooks had moved positions on the roof after SWAT Operator fired (approximately six seconds after Crooks had begun firing), the SWAT Operator could still see the “very top of his head [...] bouncing around [...] [not] enough for me to take a shot.”²⁹ Crooks slowly tried to return to firing position. The SWAT Operator testified:

So he's starting to recover. Now I'm up about the forehead, about the eyes, nose. I'm like, “All right, come on, come on, come on, come on.” I'm just -- I'm standing. I'm not on anything. I'm in the middle of the field waiting, waiting, waiting. That's about roughly ten seconds after I engaged.³⁰

The ninth shot stopped Crooks from firing again long enough for the (southern of two) Secret Service counter-snipers to locate Crooks as a target, establish a stabilized view of Crooks using a world-class super high-quality magnified rifle scope mounted on a tripod supported 300 WIN MAG chambered bolt action sniper rifle.

The Tenth Shot – Secret Service kills Crooks

Gunshot	Time after 1st shot	Time between shots
Shot #10	15.94 seconds	10.05 seconds

At 15.94 seconds after Crooks fired the first shot, and 10.05 seconds after the ninth shot stopped Crooks, the SWAT Operator heard the tenth shot from the USSS counter-sniper.³¹ A highly trained Secret Service counter-sniper fired the tenth shot. The 210-grain Berger VLD BT or Sierra HPBT bullet traveled 195 yards, entering Crooks’ skull below the left nostril above the upper lip, causing a small entry wound concordant with the 210-grain bullet. The 210-grain projectile exited Crooks’ skull below and behind his right ear, causing a large exit cavity and instant death. Fragmentation of the copper jacket of the bullet was extensive.

The SWAT Operator recounted the timing of all ten shots to the Task Force:

[From] what I've been told, what the analyses are saying is like 5 seconds for Crooks to shoot eight. Then I was like 5.77 after his eighth shot. I was like a half a second. It was like a half a second after his eighth shot, I engaged, which made me like 5.77, like that. Then he engaged like -- Secret Service had engaged at like 15 something, which is like 10 seconds after, you know. So from shot one to shot ten is 15 seconds. So Crooks got his eight out in 5. I engaged shortly after his 5 seconds, 5.77, something like that, and

²⁹ *Id.* at 33.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.* at 32.

then at 15 something is whenever the Secret Service had engaged the tenth shot.³²

His recollection of the timing of shots fired mirrors my own analysis based on review of video and conversations—the approximate five seconds for Crooks to fire eight shots and the approximate 10 seconds between the ninth and ten shots.

After Shots Ended

The SWAT Operator testified that at that time, he believed the Secret Service counter-sniper on the roof of Building 16 had taken the kill shot. He yelled to that Secret Service counter-sniper “[h]ey, good hit. Good hit. Confirmed,” but the Secret Service counter-sniper did not acknowledge his statement.³³ He also tried to contact his command about his shot, but his radio was “blowing up,” so he went back to work after deciding he would inform his commander later.³⁴ He helped retrieve medics for victim Corey Comperatore and then went to the hospital to protect President-elect Trump.³⁵ He did not discuss the ninth shot with any individual until he returned to the rally site later that evening.³⁶ Days later, during his interview with state and federal officials, the SWAT Operator testified that he learned his bullet casing was recovered.³⁷

³² *Id.* at 74.

³³ *Id.* at 33-34.

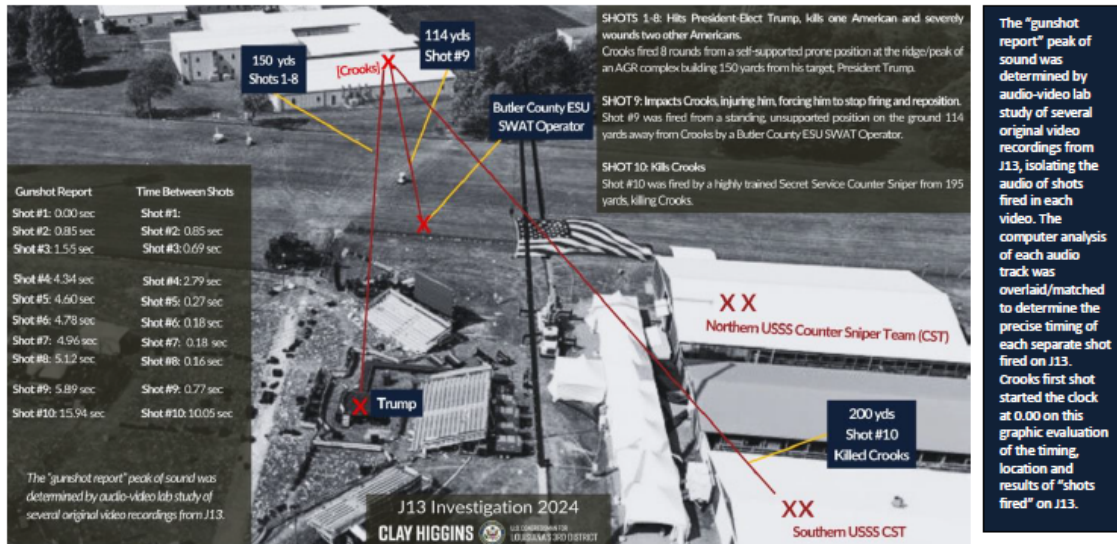
³⁴ *Id.* at 78.

³⁵ *Id.* at 84-85.

³⁶ *Id.* at 79.

³⁷ *Id.* at 82.

July 13 Shot Breakdown³⁸



The "gunshot report" peak of sound was determined by audio-video lab study of several original video recordings from J13, isolating the audio of shots fired in each video. The computer analysis of each audio track was overlaid/matched to determine the precise timing of each separate shot fired on J13. Crooks first shot started the clock at 0:00 on this graphic evaluation of the timing, location and results of "shots fired" on J13.

SHOTS 1-8

Crooks fired 8 rounds from a self-supported prone position positioned at the ridge/peak of an AGR complex building 150 yards from his target, President-Elect Trump. Crooks shot #1 struck President-Elect Trump in his right ear, and Crooks shot #2 was fired .85 seconds later, followed by shot #3 fired 1.55 seconds after shot #1. Then, Trump went down as he was swarmed and covered by Secret Service Agents, changing the target access for Crooks, who ran 2.8 seconds off the clock as he adjusted his aim downwards a bit and into the now covered target. Crooks fired shots 4,5,6,7, and 8 from 4.34 seconds after shot #1 to 5.12 seconds after shot #1. To summarize, Crook shots 1, 2 and 3 were carefully fired in 1.55 seconds at a standing, clear line of sight target, President-Elect Trump. Then, after adjusting aim, Crooks fired shots 4,5,6,7, and 8 in just .78 seconds.

SHOT 9

Shot #9 was fired from a standing, unsupported position on the ground 114 yards away from Crooks. A lone Butler County ESU SWAT Operator who is a highly trained tactical operator with a Combat Veteran Army background identified Crooks as an active shooter/sniper and observed Crooks firing his AR-15. The SWAT Operator raised his non-magnified standard issue M4 AR platform SWAT rifle, stabilized his

target through the EOTECH red-dot sight, and fired shot #9, 5.89 seconds after shot #1, just .77 seconds after Crooks had fired shot #8. **Shot #9** impacted Crooks by striking the MAGPUL high-density plastic upper buttstock of Crooks' rifle, shattering a large plastic section of the MAGPUL stock and causing an explosion of shrapnel as the broken stock smashed into Crooks' right neck and jaw area below his right ear. Shot #9 stopped Crooks, causing him to lower his elbow-supported prone firing position and back away from the AGR building roof ridge-line by several feet. Crooks recovered from the impact and injury of shot #9, and over the course of 10.1 seconds, Crooks regained a prone self-supported firing position, now several feet further away and lower in profile from the Butler County ESU SWAT Operator, who had remained focused on target through his EOTECH sight since shot #9. The Operator was confident that his shot #9 had been a hit. However, he also observed that Crooks had, within a few seconds, begun moving again. As the SWAT Operator calmly waited for a sufficient target profile of Crooks to shoot him again. **Shot #10** was fired by a United States Secret Service Counter Sniper Team Operator from the southern of two USSS CS team positions. The Butler County SWAT Operator who fired shot #9 is most certainly considered to be an expert witness. All physical, laboratory,

circumstantial, and testimonial evidence supports the sworn testimony of the SWAT operator. In summary, shot #9 stopped Crooks from firing again long enough for the (southern of two) United States Secret Service Counter Sniper Team Operators to locate Crooks as a target, establish a stabilized view of Crooks using a world-class super high-quality magnified riflescope mounted on a tripod supported 300 WinMag chambered bolt action sniper rifle.

SHOT 10

At 15.94 seconds after Crooks fired shot #1, and 10.05 seconds after shot #9 stopped Crooks, A highly trained Secret Service Counter Sniper fired shot #10. The 210-grain Berger VLD BT or Sierra HPBT bullet traveled 195 yards, entering Crooks' skull below the left nostril above the upper lip, causing a small entry wound concordant with the 210-grain Berger VLD BT or Sierra HPBT bullet. The 210-grain projectile exited Crooks' skull below and behind his right ear, causing a large exit cavity and instant death. Fragmentation of the copper jacket of the bullet was extensive.

³⁸ Graphic created by Staff.

2. Analysis of Crooks' Injuries and Rifle Damage

As recently as December 4, the FBI asserted to the Task Force that only two bullet fragments associated with Crooks' death were received and examined at the FBI laboratory—one recovered from Crooks' right upper back and one in proximity to Crooks from the roof of an AGR building. The FBI stated that the fragment recovered from Crooks "bears no marks of evidentiary value for comparison purposes, and as such no comparison can be made to the rifles used by the USSS and local law enforcement." Further, the FBI's metallurgy examinations determined that the fragment recovered from Crooks is a copper-zinc alloy "consistent with the type of ammunition used by both the Secret Service and local law enforcement (known as an inclusion to a mass-produced product type)."³⁹

*Bullet Fragment Recovered from Crooks' Right Upper Back*⁴⁰



The fragment recovered on the AGR roof in proximity to Crooks, which tested positively for Crooks' DNA, was found by FBI analysis to be consistent with the class and general rifling characteristics of the Secret Service rifle used on July 13. This fragment was eliminated as having been fired by the rifle used by local law enforcement based on class characteristics.

While the FBI did find the bullet casing corresponding to the SWAT Operator's bullet, neither of the bullet fragments in the FBI's possession have been attributed by the FBI to the SWAT Operator's rifle.⁴¹ The FBI's position is that there is "no evidence or forensic testing results that definitively show Crooks was struck by local law enforcement." While the FBI points to what it says is a lack of forensic evidence, the FBI has not affirmatively stated that the SWAT Operator's shot did not impact Crooks or his rifle.

³⁹ Production to Task Force, Fed. Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Lab. No. 2024-01571-43, FBI-HTF-BTLR-000489 (Dec. 4, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴⁰ Production to Task Force, Fed. Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Dep't of Justice, FBI-HTF-BTLR-000480 (Dec. 9, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴¹ SWAT Operator, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview with the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 82 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

The Task Force has in its possession autopsy photographs showing an injury to Crooks' right neck, which the Autopsy Report attributes to being caused by impact with the buttstock of his rifle ("[e]xit wound of the right lateral neck, with adjacent patterned abrasion consistent with rifle buttstock abrasion").⁴²

*Allegheny Co. Medical Examiner Autopsy Image of Crooks' Neck Injury*⁴³



The FBI released photographs of Crooks' rifle showing the damaged buttstock. The Task Force also examined it in person at the FBI laboratory in Quantico, Virginia.

*FBI Image of Damaged Buttstock of Crooks' Rifle*⁴⁴



The angular shape of the abrasion supports the Medical Examiner's conclusion that contact with the damaged buttstock caused the injury. This is evident when overlaying the two images.

⁴² Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, Autopsy Report, 1 (Aug. 5, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴³ Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, ATF_7148 (Jul. 14, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴⁴ Butler Investigation Evidence Photos, FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Aug. 28, 2024).

Overlay of Crooks' Buttstock Injury and Damaged Buttstock⁴⁵



The FBI paints a narrative of the Secret Service bullet hitting Crooks, traveling through his skull, exiting his neck, shattering the buttstock of his rifle, reentering Crooks through his right upper back in a singular reentrance wound, thereafter fragmenting and causing multiple exit wounds.⁴⁶ The FBI's proposed series of events would mean that the Secret Service bullet, after exiting Crooks' neck on the right-hand side, impacted the left side of the buttstock, broke it, and still somehow propelled it in a direction toward Crooks' body and into his neck to create the injury.

It is unclear how seriously the FBI has considered the alternative: that the local law enforcement bullet hit the buttstock of Crooks' rifle, shattered it, and propelled it directly into Crooks. In addition to the injury, this alternate series of events would also explain why Crooks paused his gunfire for approximately ten seconds after his final shot before the Secret Service counter-sniper bullet killed him. While the FBI maintains there is no evidence to definitively show that the SWAT Operator hit impacted Crooks or his rifle, as discussed in the preceding section, the SWAT Operator steadfastly asserts he made contact.

If, as he testified, the SWAT Operator's shot indeed went to Crooks' low-right side, one can reasonably understand how his shot may have hit the rifle.⁴⁷ In this scenario, his shot would have impacted the buttstock and propelled it toward Crooks' body, thereafter making contact with Crooks' neck.

⁴⁵ Overlay created by Staff.

⁴⁶ Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, Autopsy Report, 7-8 (Aug. 5, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴⁷ SWAT Operator, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview with the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 36 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

While the FBI tested the broken buttstock and found traces of lead consistent with the impact of a bullet or a bullet fragment, the FBI has not yet reconstructed the buttstock from Crooks' rifle. They are not able to provide evidence as to the impact point on the buttstock, or conclusively prove what caused the MAGPUL-brand buttstock to shatter. While the FBI has committed to this reconstruction, it still had not been concluded at the time the Task Force issued its Final Report. Another member of Butler ESU, who was on the AGR roof immediately after the shooting, described the damaged buttstock:

The back of that buttstock had several inches of damage. As I'm on the roof, I'm seeing large pieces of plastic; particularly, one large chunk that is the same material, same polymer, same I would say rounded edge that would be from that buttstock [...] [s]o, obviously, damage to the rifle. All of those components are on the roof. It's not like it was damaged prior to [the shooting].⁴⁸

There is reason for optimism that the reconstruction of the buttstock could yield more definitive answers about what caused it damage. Damage from an impact on the rear-left side (facing Crooks) of the buttstock could indicate damage from a bullet fragment fired by the Secret Service counter-sniper, while damage on the opposite (right side) would align with the shot taken by the SWAT Operator.

The SWAT Operator is an experienced marksman, having served in the military and spent eight years with his current tactical unit.⁴⁹ He has never once wavered from his testimony in the four times the Task Force and I have spoken with him. The abrasion on Crooks' neck is consistent with the buttstock being propelled toward the body. The Task Force and public are entitled to a more thorough explanation from the FBI about why it has asserted one scenario over the other when examination of the relevant evidence is yet to be completed.

3. Further examination of forensic evidence

Delays and lost opportunities to review evidence, attributable to the FBI, cloud current interpretations of the ballistic evidence from July 13. This includes the aforementioned delay in reconstructing the buttstock of Crooks' rifle as well as the loss of bullet fragments in Crooks' body, a lack of complete analysis on bullet fragments (to the best of the Task Force's knowledge), and analysis about the implications of locations where casings were found on the roof.

Destruction of Crooks' Body

⁴⁸ Operator 2, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview with the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 138 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁴⁹ SWAT Operator, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview with the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 34 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

With the FBI's approval, and without informing Congress, Crooks' body was released to a funeral home on July 22 and cremated.⁵⁰ This eliminated the possibility of conducting further testing or collecting evidence that remained.

Discussion of ballistics evidence is still ongoing more than sixty years after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In the case of the attempted assassination of President-elect Trump, it is wholly unacceptable that the FBI would not take reasonable steps to preserve all evidence to answer questions that could extend beyond the scope of a criminal probe.

Despite the FBI's assertion that it is "not standard procedure or practice for the FBI or any law enforcement agency to request that the coroner or medical examiner maintain indefinite custody of a deceased subject's body" once the investigative purposes of the FBI and its partner agencies are completed, this was not a standard situation.⁵¹

The SWAT Operator's shot and one of Crooks' eight are not the only projectiles (or projectile fragments) the FBI does not have in its possession from the scene in Butler. For example, there were multiple small bullet fragments in Crooks' person that were not collected. These are visible in the postmortem x-ray images and described in the Autopsy Report ("[x]-rays additionally show multiple small, retained bullet fragments in the mid and right inferior aspects of the head, posterolateral right neck, and right shoulder/upper back.").⁵²

Postmortem X-Ray of Crooks⁵³



⁵⁰ Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, Crooks Investigator Narrative (Aug. 26, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁵¹ Kevin Rojek, *FBI Pittsburgh Special Agent in Charge's Remarks to Media on Updates to the Butler, Pennsylvania, Assassination Attempt Investigation*, FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Aug. 28, 2024).

⁵² Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, Autopsy Report, 13 (Aug. 5, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁵³ Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, crooks_xray_1_closeup (Jul. 14, 2024, at 08:35:00) (on file with the Task Force).

It is not that the FBI could not find these fragments, but rather that all known fragments were not collected. Only one of the fragments found in Crooks' body was recovered for examination and is in the FBI's possession, which is the fragment from his right upper back discussed in the Task Force's Final Report. Despite FBI and PSP personnel being present at the autopsy, there was supposedly no deliberation about whether or not to collect the remaining fragments, which were deemed too small to justify recovery.⁵⁴ These fragments should have been collected and examined by the FBI, to determine in their laboratories by subject matter experts whether they offered any evidentiary value.

Further, the tissue damaged from the buttstock was not tested to determine if the injury occurred prior to Crooks' death. The roughly ten seconds separating the SWAT Operator shot and the Secret Service kill shot may not have been enough time for the damaged tissue to have begun to heal in order to yield results showing whether the injury occurred before death. That question will never be answered, however, as the body was cremated before any such testing could be requested or performed.

Analysis of Ammunition

Three weapons were fired during the attempted assassination of President-elect Trump. The first eight projectiles fired on July 13 were from the weapon used by Thomas Crooks, which was an AR-15 style weapon which chambered a 5.56mm projectile.

The ninth projectile fired came from the SWAT Operator's rifle, which was an AR-15 style M4 rifle which fired a 5.56mm NATO 62 grain TAP Barrier projectile manufactured by Hornady. The SWAT Operator testified that he loaded 28 rounds in his 30-round magazine so he wouldn't get "double feeds."⁵⁵ He alternated the rounds in his magazine with two bonded rounds and then two hollow points until he loaded all 28 rounds. He testified that the round he shot would have been a Hornady TAP Barrier 62gr round.⁵⁶ Hornady has advised me that the jacketed material is C210, which is a copper-zinc alloy projectile with a lead core with 5 percent antimony.

⁵⁴ Production to Task Force, Allegheny Co. Office of the Medical Examiner, Autopsy Report, 13 (Aug. 5, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁵⁵ SWAT Operator, Butler ESU, Transcribed Interview with the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, 35 (Sept. 13, 2024) (on file with the Task Force).

⁵⁶ *Id.*

Cartridge Box of Type of Ammunition Fired by SWAT Operator⁵⁷



The third weapon, which fired the tenth and final shot on July 13, the shot that killed Crooks, was a Secret Service rifle which fired either a 210 Sierra HPBT or 300 WIN MAG 210 grain Berger very low drag (VLD) boat tail (BT) projectile loaded by Black Hills on special contract for the Secret Service. The manufacturer noted such a projectile would have a measurably thinner jacket than Hornady manufactured jacketed projectiles, although both projectiles (the Hornady and the Berger or Sierra) are housed in casings manufactured by Hornady. While the manufacturer advised that a test could be run to compare thickness of the jackets, to date, I have no information that the FBI or anyone else has attempted this analysis to determine the manufacturer (and therefore shooter) of recovered bullet fragments.

300 WIN MAG and 5.56mm Cartridges⁵⁸



⁵⁷ Production to Rep. Clay Higgins, Butler ESU.

⁵⁸ Photograph taken by Rep. Clay Higgins.



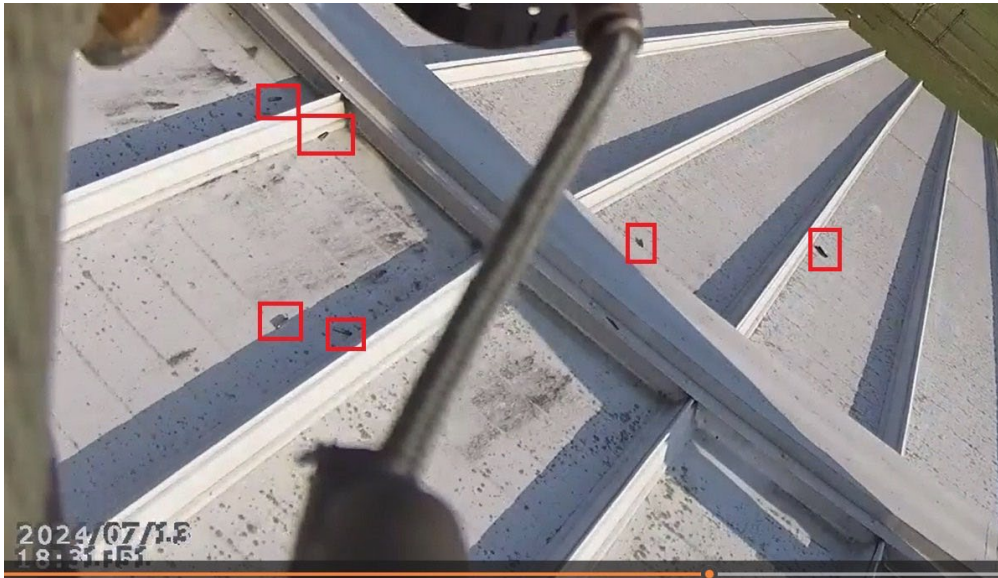
300 WIN MAG Cartridges



To address one apparent point of confusion: the projectile fired by the Secret Service counter-sniper was not made by Hornady (who manufactured the casing) but Berger or Sierra, which specialize in projectiles. Conversations with representatives from Hornady confirmed they had produced the casing for the Secret Service round, not the projectile. Hornady manufactured 208 grain projectiles for the 300 WIN MAG, not 210, and it was the Hornady representative who confirmed either Berger or Sierra was the manufacturer of the 210 GR. BT projectile, as previously stated.

Location of Crooks' body and casings on AGR roof

Photographic evidence of the AGR roof shows that several casings from Crooks' rifle were found at a location several feet higher on the roof than the final resting place of his body:



The placement of the casings suggests that Crooks fired from a location higher on the roof than his final position. Presumably, something forced Crooks to retreat from his initial position. In my view, the most logical—but not definitive—explanation is the shot fired by the SWAT Operator. To date, neither I nor the Task Force has seen any analysis from the FBI explaining the locations of the shell casings and why they came to rest at a location higher (and upslope) from Crooks’ body.

Critical Execution Failures of July 13

The Task Force’s Final Report presents a meticulous analysis of specific mistakes by the Secret Service in the minutes, hours, and days that preceded Thomas Crooks firing eight rounds at the Butler rally. Many of these mistakes are accompanied by reasoned recommendations for avoiding a reoccurrence. In my view, some of these recommendations are more directly responsive to critical failures and have greater potential to thwart a future assassination attempt (e.g. “written policy that clearly articulates a threat-based methodology for asset and resource approval”) than others (e.g. prioritizing experience in the assignment process).

While there were significant mistakes in the planning phase, in my view, the comparatively simple failures of execution surrounding even an imperfect plan by teams and individuals at the rally in Butler on July 13 are more disturbing and responsible for the failure than the planning. The harsh reality is that security plans, much like plans in battle, rarely anticipate every possible weakness when put to serious test. Such plans aim to place individuals and other assets in strategic locations for deterrence as well as activation and rapid response when an actual threat emerges.

⁵⁹ Produced to Task Force, Beaver ESU, Screenshot from body-worn camera video footage (Jul. 13, 2024, at 6:35 p.m.) (on file with the Task Force) Red boxes added by Staff.

For even the best laid plan to succeed, key individuals must execute at or near a level of ability anticipated at the planning stage.

Professionals charged in executing these strategies should never assume that planning has correctly identified every potential threat and that every threat-mitigation measure will work according to the plan. This is the essence of redundancy that is core to the Secret Service's zero-fail mission approach.

Studying the Butler rally on July 13, there are far too many deeply concerning examples of Secret Service personnel at the rally failing to ask critical questions, neglecting to make necessary requests, or calling out even recognized deviations from security planning. I refrain from calling out individuals here—but the troubling cultural pattern of conduct at the Butler rally is brutally clear. And careful review of the interview of transcripts compiled by the Task Force should make this apparent to readers with experience in law enforcement.

Bottom line: bringing more resources, providing more training, and creating more systems for sharing information can only improve security so much if a fundamental shift among Secret Service personnel to a more proactive, anticipatory, and situationally aware mindset does not happen. Working at the Secret Service is not for everyone, nor is it a 9-to-5 job. In working to prevent a reoccurrence, the Secret Service should not simply train individuals differently, but rather take a fundamental look at who they recruit and the cloth from which these individuals are cut.

Secret Service event planning anticipates, as it should, performance by high-level professionals. Acting Director Ronald Rowe has acknowledged complacency was a problem at Butler. Ensuring that Secret Service personnel with the proper aptitude are assigned to missions is the most critical lesson for the Secret Service going forward.

Conclusion

Serving on this Task Force, led by Chairman Mike Kelly and Ranking Minority Member Jason Crow, has been an honor. The July 13 shooting in Butler, as well as the second assassination attempt on President-elect Trump that occurred on September 15 in West Palm Beach, offer valuable lessons for the Secret Service and our nation.

Our understanding of what happened in both assassination attempts remains incomplete. For all the Task Force learned about the events and security failures of July 13, important questions remain: Who was Thomas Crooks? What motivated a once bright student to attempt to assassinate a once and future President? What happened on the roof of the AGR building for the ten seconds after Crooks' last shot until he was killed by the Secret Service? Why are investigative agencies withholding information from Congress when the only known suspect is deceased? In West Palm Beach, the ongoing effort to prosecute the suspect provides an answer, but not a justification, for the lack of cooperation the Task Force experienced.

As the Task Force completes its work, and responsibility for relevant oversight moves back to standing committees of jurisdiction on which I serve, I intend to continue this investigation in

the new Congress. Questions remain unanswered and federal agencies cannot be allowed to simply run out the clock. The American people deserve answers and my efforts to find them will not end with the expiration of the 118th Congress.

Addendum – August 12 Preliminary Investigative Report to Chairman Kelly



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: *Preliminary Investigative Report to Chairman Mike Kelly*

Investigative Authority: House Bi-Partisan Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Former President Donald Trump.

Author of Preliminary Report: Congressman Clay

Higgins Date: 12 August 2024

Note: This report is preliminary, not conclusive. The preliminary observations are considered sensitive, confidential, and intended for investigative purposes. The investigation is ongoing.

After appropriate arrangement through the Congressional office of Task Force Chairman Mike Kelly, whose District encompasses Butler County, Pennsylvania, wherein the Assassination attempt occurred on July 13, 2024, heretofore referred to as J13, I traveled to Butler County on Sunday, August 4, leaving the area on Tuesday, August 6. During my time on the ground in PA, I was able to focus about 20 hours on my initial investigative endeavor. As always, my investigation was focused on hard evidence and facts, specific observations guided by instinct and experience. My overall mission was to personally observe and investigate the available crime scene site, along with consideration of both anticipated and unanticipated interactions with witnesses, the crime scene landscape, hard evidence, corroborative evidence, and circumstantial evidence. My initial investigative intent was to carefully observe and listen to document and consider the “totality of circumstance” surrounding the attempted assassination of President Trump. “Be calm, move slowly to the center, and just let the crime scene talk to you...”. This was advice to me, as a young patrol cop, from a renowned investigator many years ago. That was my purpose, as I traveled to Butler, to let the crime scene talk to me. In many ways, this preliminary report is essentially what the crime scene told me when I listened.

Mr. Chairman, our Task Force has a tremendous responsibility to reveal the full truth, whatever that truth may be, to the American people, and our TF has been granted full Congressional investigative authority. Confidentially, I was on the ground in Butler Sun-Mon-Tues, as clarified above. I was accompanied and assisted by retired SWAT operator John Chautin, my Congressional District Director. Prior to Congress, I served with District Director Chautin in law enforcement for many years. I was fully supported by your office, and my 20 hours of uninhibited, intense investigative effort was quietly and extensively supported by local law enforcement leadership. It is important to note that Pennsylvania law enforcement is coordinated a bit differently than most sovereign States.

During my investigation effort in Butler County, I was greatly assisted by ESU Commander Edward Lenz and Butler County District Attorney’s Office Senior Detective William Mayhugh. The

Butler County Emergency Services Unit (ESU) is a well-established, well-equipped, and trained tactical unit drawn from tactical officers across the County who serve in various police departments. ESU is the equivalent to a combination of a traditional Sheriff's Office SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) and SRT (Special Response Team). Butler County ESU handles all tactical missions for the County, including missions that interact with visiting law enforcement agencies like U.S. Marshals, ATF, FBI, ICE, and USSS. Security for J13 was controlled by the United States Secret Service (USSS), and local law enforcement assistance for USSS was coordinated through ESU. This coordination included shared responsibilities for tactical teams on and around the Butler County Fairgrounds (BCFG), where the J13 Trump rally was held. (The BCFG is commonly called "the farm" by mainstream media.) ESU also coordinated non-tactical operator law enforcement assistance for J13, patrol officers in the larger area handling traffic and crowd control, as well as staged at various points as "response units" should there be a need. Protests, fights, vehicle crashes, etc. are all possibilities at large events like J13, so ESU commander Edward Lenz worked for a couple of weeks prior to J13 to coordinate the entire Butler County law enforcement support for USSS, as requested by USSS, and ultimately under the command of USSS as that command related to deployment and areas of responsibility.

For the purposes of the preliminary report, I would like to clarify again that this report is intended to promote discussion amongst Task Force Members and encourage well-disciplined further investigation. Many questions and considerations remain, and our full investigation will require months of endeavor. However, after 20 hours on the ground in Butler, I have indeed listened carefully to the crime scene, and it has whispered to me many answers that America must know, as deemed appropriate by Chairman Kelly. Many, many considerations were cleared up, like clutter, which allows an investigator to focus on central questions that remain, bigger considerations. I'm working on assembling a much more thorough initial investigative report, which will include a tremendous amount of digital imagery and documented observation/explanation. The next report I will submit for Chairman Kelly's review will be much more comprehensive and will require a few weeks to produce because the amount of raw data I have harvested/documentated is vast.

Observations of Note:

- Prior to arranging travel to Butler, I had reviewed and filed scores of videos and recreations from online sources. Like many Americans, I invested countless hours of personal research. However, effective investigation requires objective investigation. I researched what I could in preparation for any role I might be called upon to serve. When Speaker Johnson advised me that I had been appointed to the Task Force, I had already begun investigating. My first text regarding J13 was 3 minutes after the shooting. I haven't stopped investigating since then.
- The "Butler Farm" County Fairgrounds is a Fairgrounds, not a farm. Yes, it has barns to accommodate agricultural and livestock shows and fairs... but it is not an actual farm in the middle of a broad rural area. It's a longstanding, very well-maintained large Fairgrounds in the middle of Butler, Pennsylvania. The "Butler Farm," a well-known fairground in a small city in a rural County, is, one might concur, an excellent place for a Trump rally. Generations of Pennsylvanians have attended events at the "Butler Farm" County Fairgrounds. Large crowds could be accommodated, and those crowds would be familiar and comfortable in the fairground's environment.
- AGR International is an internationally owned corporation; however, AGR was born of a glass research scientist in Butler in 1927. In 1962, he sold his company, which became American Glass Research. AGR was incorporated into a larger international company in 2024, but the people on the

ground at AGR are generationally connected to the company. One of those men is William Bellis, who assisted my investigation at AGR for several hours on Monday, August 5. He was 100% accommodating.

- According to my investigation, USSS had never, prior to J13, assigned a counter-sniper team to a former POTUS, including Trump. I will not be 100% certain of this assertion without further investigation into documented records, but USSS counter-sniper teams stated clearly to ESU Command that they had never been deployed to a former POTUS event, nor had they heard of a prior deployment by other USSS counter-sniper teams.
- Butler County runs the radio communications tower out of their 911 Call Center. That is pretty much the way radio communications work across America in every County, in every State. If their radios are are “interoperable,” a visiting law enforcement agency is assigned a frequency, a “channel” for their operation while in that County. If their radios are not “interoperable” with the County Communications tower, then the visiting agency is assigned/offered actual radios to use while they are running their operation in the County.
- USSS did not retrieve the radios that had been set aside for them by Butler County tactical command. The radio comms were properly and perfectly arranged during the extensive pre-mission planning. On J12, the Butler County ESU Commander personally reminded the USSS counter-sniper teams to pick up their assigned radios at the ESU Command Post RV, which was positioned according to planning at the Butler Fairgrounds, the following morning before 1100 hrs. It didn’t happen.
- Radio traffic transmitted through a County Radio tower 911 Center is recorded. Chairman Kelly and I have a timeline and transcripts of all local radio traffic, as provided by ESU Commander Lenz.
- As provided by ESU Commander Lenz, Chairman Kelly and I also have other ESU/USSS J13 briefing files, including the pre-mission briefing plan from ESU and USSS counter-sniper pre-mission briefing/graphs.
- There are videos circulating on the internet that appear to show a “muzzle flash” from inside the AGR building, from the window below Crooks’ firing position on the roof of the AGR building. I carefully examined this window inside and out, and I interviewed the AGR employee who has worked in that small office area for many years. That window does not open and has never opened. The “muzzle flash” from inside that window was either a digital fabrication or an iPhone light or iPhone camera flash reflected from the glass of the window.
- Crooks did not have a ladder at AGR on J13. He accessed the roof by climbing onto an air conditioning unit. I reenacted his climb with no problem.
- I have not yet investigated Crooks’ origins, how he came to be a shooter, how he manufactured a remote trigger bomb, etc. I have not reviewed the harvested evidence, nor have I examined his home, his vehicle, spoken with his family, his neighbors, his classmates, examined his computer, his emails, or his closet. I have not investigated the life and actions of Thomas Matthew Crooks outside of his actions on J13. But I will. We will. We’re just getting started, Mr. Chairman.
- 8 shots were fired by Crooks from his firing (and dying) position on the AGR rooftop. The position provided excellent concealment for Crooks from the northern counter-sniper team due to the foliage/branches of two trees. Crooks’ firing position did NOT offer excellent concealment from the

southern counter-sniper team. However, it should be noted that the would-be assassin perfectly positioned himself to minimize the threat of counter-fire from the ground or the USSS counter-sniper teams. Crooks' firing position was also several feet back from the actual peak of the AGR rooftop. By choosing this position, Crooks effectively minimized the sky-lined profile of his head and upper body.

- All 8 casings were recovered and are allegedly in proper possession of the FBI. Thomas Matthew Crooks' rifle is also allegedly in the proper possession of the FBI. I will need to examine all of the physical evidence that has been harvested by law enforcement and is in the possession of the FBI. All of it.
- The 9th shot fired on J13 was from a Butler SWAT operator from the ground about 100 yards away from the AGR building. Shot 9 hit Crooks' rifle stock and fraged his face/neck/right shoulder area from the stock breaking up. The SWAT operator who took this shot was a total badass; when he had sighted the shooter Crooks as a mostly obscured by foliage moving target on the AGR rooftop, he immediately left his assigned post and ran towards the threat, running to a clear shot position directly into the line of fire while Crooks was firing 8 rounds. On his own, this ESU SWAT operator took a very hard shot, one shot. He stopped Crooks and importantly, I believe the shot damaged the buffer tube on Crooks' AR. I won't be certain of this until I can examine Crooks' rifle, but I'm 99% sure, based upon reliable eye-witness ESU tactical officers who observed Crooks' rifle before the FBI harvested it as evidence. This means that if his AR buffer tube was damaged, Crooks' rifle wouldn't fire after his 8th shot.
- Crooks "went down" from his firing position when shot 9 was fired, and the SWAT officer was certain of his hit. According to the ESU SWAT operator, Crooks recovered after just a few seconds, and "popped back up".
- The 10th (and, I believe, final) shot was fired from the southern counter-sniper team. I will not be 100% certain of this until further investigation. However, I am quite sure that the USSS southern counter-sniper team fired the killing shot, which, according to my investigation, entered somewhere around the left mouth area and exited the right ear area. Instant over. This entry-exit aligns with USSS southern counter-sniper team position.
- The FBI released all First Responders that evening, much to everyone's surprise. I interviewed several... EMS, cops, etc.
- The FBI released the crime scene after just 3 days, much to everyone's surprise. I interviewed several First Responders who expressed everything from surprise to dismay to suspicion regarding the fact that the FBI released the crime scene so early after J13. It should be noted that the FBI was fully aware of the fact that Congress would be investigating J13. The FBI does not exist in a vacuum. They had to know that releasing the J13 crime scene would injure the immediate observations of any following investigation.
- The FBI cleaned up biological evidence from the crime scene, which is unheard of. Cops don't do that, ever.
- On J13, one of Crooks' shots hit a pressurized hydraulic line on a staged piece of heavy equipment. My effort to examine the hydraulic line evidence revealed that the tractor belonged to a rental company. It is unknown if that hydraulic line was harvested properly as evidence by the FBI, but it certainly should have been. It remains a question for further investigation. I need to examine that

hydraulic line because confirmation of the caliber of the rifle projectile that hit the line would be helpful to our investigation. That's how the examination of evidence works; we have to look at everything.

- My effort to examine Crooks' body on Monday, August 5, caused quite a stir and revealed a disturbing fact... the FBI released the body for cremation 10 days after J13. On J23, Crooks was gone. Nobody knew this until Monday, August 5, including the County Coroner, law enforcement, Sheriff, etc. Yes, Butler County Coroner technically had legal authority over the body, but I spoke with the Coroner, and he would have never released Crooks' body to the family for cremation or burial without specific permission from the FBI.
- The coroner's report and autopsy report are both "late." As of Monday, August 5, they were a week late. The problem with me not being able to examine the actual body is that I won't know 100% if the coroner's report and the autopsy report are accurate. We will actually never know. Yes, we'll get the reports and pictures, etc, but I will not ever be able to say with certainty that those reports and pictures are accurate according to my own examination of the body. Again, similar to releasing the crime scene and scrubbing crime scene biological evidence... this action by the FBI can only be described by any reasonable man as an obstruction to any following investigative effort. Please note, Mr. Chairman, that on J23, the day that Crooks was cremated, both the Homeland Security Committee and the Oversight Committee had begun House Committee jurisdictional investigation into J13, and Speaker Johnson had already stated that he was forming an Official Congressional investigative body. Why, then, by what measure, would the FBI release his body to the family for cremation? This pattern of investigative scorched earth by the FBI is quite troubling.
- It should be noted that my initial investigation on the ground in Butler was greatly assisted by the County Tactical team's commander and the head investigator for the Butler County DA's office. Those gentlemen had nothing to hide, and they were 100% accommodating despite my rather intense demands on their time and resources due to the compressed schedule I was working with.
- My assessment of the local law enforcement's overall performance on J13 is that the ESU was very professionally deployed and commanded. Yes, it was quite chaotic, and every single police officer reflects upon dangerous and extreme engagements, and we universally critique our own performance because crazy things happen on the street. However, my professional assessment for the purposes of this preliminary investigative report is that the Butler County ESU performed quite well under the circumstances.
- The owner/top management of the business, AGR, stayed with me and the 2 County investigators for 3 hours as I covered every inch I needed to inside/outside/on rooftops/climbing AC units, etc. He was very helpful and 100% squared away. I recreated every step of the County tactical team that was inside and every movement of Crooks outside. Examined every window, etc. It was long and hot, and the AGR exec stayed with us. No area was restricted in any way.
- The water tower was cleared by drone J13 AM by the County tactical commander, ESU Commander Lenz himself.
- The water tower ladder was never lowered that day. Two local cops, non-ESU officers, were assigned to be parked in the water tower area as "response" units for traffic issues or whatever. They DID leave that post, but only in the hour prior to shooting.

- There are videos on the internet showing a dark figure or a shadow on the water tower on J13. If there had been someone on that tower on J13, it would have to have been some top-shelf operator way beyond anything I've ever actually seen. Regular SWAT operators or snipers would not have the skills and gear to quickly overcome the first 25 feet of no ladder and then climb the remaining 75 feet to the catwalk, and then climb the quite intimidating and precarious dome vent access ladder. It is true that the vent area at the very top of the water tower is the only point that would have allowed a clear line of sight to both Trump and Crooks' firing position. I sighted out this fact very carefully during my hours on the ground at the Butler Farm/AGR/ water tower crime scene area. However, I do not believe it was possible for a "2nd shooter" sniper to be on top of that water tower on J13, nor have I seen any evidence that supports the theory of a 2nd shooter. I'm not saying conclusively that there was no other shooter somewhere or that no other conspirators were involved in J13, but I'm saying that based on my investigation thus far, there were 10 shots fired on J13, and all shots are accounted for, and all shots align with their source. Crooks' 8 shots (3 plus 5), ESU SWAT 1 shot, USSS southern sniper team 1 shot. Over.
- I will be allowed to climb the tower at some point, perhaps next month, but it's quite a climb. The Butler County Water Works directors were very concerned about accommodating my climb, although they did agree to a later date. I'll have to return when I can coordinate with their safety team because we just ran out of daylight, but Butler County Water Works was cooperative, and I got a very close look at the water tower on Monday, August 5.

Mr. Chairman, many questions remain, yet several theories have been examined, and several questions have already been answered. I am prayerful that our Task Force can move forward effectively and professionally, guided by our shared love for America and our determination to seek full truth. Please know, as we continue our investigation into the attempted assassination of our former President, you can rely upon me as a solemn investigator of fact. It is with that spirit that I submit this confidential preliminary investigative report.

Respectfully,



Congressman Clay Higgins