

29 November 1966

- Stamm folder

Mr. Thomas Stamm
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Dear Tom,

Thank you for sending me your interesting paper "Dawson: Politicians at Work." With all respect, I think you are mistaken when you say on page 4 that "astonishingly, unremarked by all the Commission critics without exception, is the fact that the Zapruder film...demonstrates irrefutably and conclusively the shot which took Kennedy's life hit him from the front and right..."

You may remember that some time ago I asked and obtained your consent to quote in my manuscript on the WR the concluding portion of your notes on your visit to the Archives, describing the violent recoil to the left and back. At no time did I underestimate the unparalleled importance of that evidence. I have taken the occasion to discuss it on the Harry Gray program (11/9/66), at which time Mark Lane raised the question of the transposition of frames 314 and 315 in support of my inferences about the source of the 313 shot. Moreover, Vince Salandria's article in the October 1966 Liberation is devoted entirely to the demand that Life release the Zapruder film so that the public can see for itself the backward/leftward recoil on the 313 hit.

I cannot take time to research this further and am giving only those examples which are already at the tip of my tongue; but I feel certain that critics other than Vince, Lane, and myself have raised this point--Harold Weisberg, I think, did so, and Ray Marcus.

Therefore, I hope you will reconsider your indictment of the critics en masse, on the basis of an unwarranted impression, and rephrase this part of your paper.

On another issue: you denigrate the critics, and not for the first time, for "preoccupation with problems of evidence" and for preoccupation with "legalistic and moral concerns." I will not engage in debate with you on the merits of your reproach to the researchers and critics, but I will pose just one question: Why, instead of belaboring us for not approaching the problem in the way you think it should be approached, why don't you yourself do a definitive analysis of the "historical political event" in the terms that you advocate for others, who happen to have their own methods and views? I am not aware of being regarded one of a group of "contemptible nuisances," unless by you. And I do wonder whether we would have moved one inch from the utter sterility which prevailed for the best part of two years had it not been for the results of the "investigating a murder mystery" which you dismiss with such disdain. We differ on this, as we have always differed, but I don't think you should abandon yourself to righteousness to the point where you charge us with not saying what in fact we have said, and said publicly.

Sincerely yours,

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