

*J. R. L. Wappler or witness WIT*

Badly Reasoned

Zapruder is a manufacturer of women's dresses. His office is in the building to the east of the Depository. On the day of the assassination, he was standing on a raised concrete abutment to the west of the Depository Building and on the north side of Elm Street. He started taking pictures with his 8-mm. movie camera as the advance escort turned from Houston into Elm and suspended photographing until the Presidential car came into view. He then exposed film continuously, until the motorcade, disappeared under the Triple Underpass on its way to Parkland Hospital. This film may have been the best single piece of evidence of the crime. But the Commission, while having access to it from the beginning, never called Zapruder as a witness until toward the end of the hearings. He was questioned on July 22, 1964 (7H569ff.).

There was one thing that distinguished Zapruder from all other spectators. His camera, to which he had his eye glued, had a telephoto lens. It was focused on the President and it greatly enlarged what Zapruder saw. No other person is known to have had this greatly magnified view of the President. Therefore, Zapruder was also a unique eyewitness. While the delay in calling the man who had these unusual films was in itself questionable, when the nature of the eyewitness testimony Zapruder could have given when the shocking events were fresh in his memory is added, the failure to call him is particularly suspect. In his testimony only the slightest attention was paid to what he saw and it was even then not properly compared with his film record.

The middle of the three large road signs on the north side of Elm Street was between Zapruder and the President for about 20 frames, from about 205 to 225. Because of the downward grade to the underpass, at the beginning of the sequence, only part of the President's head is still visible over the top of this sign. The Commission's entire case is predicated upon the assumption that the first shot could not have been fired prior to frame 210, for that is the portion of the film in which, even on a still day, the President first became a clear shot from the sixth-floor window.

Zapruder was explaining how he took his pictures. "I was shooting through a telephoto lens . . . and as it (the Presidential car) reached about -- I imagine it was around here -- I heard the first shot and I saw the President lean over and grab himself . . ." (7H571). Lawyers know very well that such words as "here" in testimony relating to a location reflect nothing on the printed page. When they 'want the testimony clear, they ask the witness to identify the spot meant by "here." Zapruder was not asked to explain where "here" was. But the startling meaning of Zapruder's testimony is this: He saw the first shot hit the President! He described the Presidents reaction to it. Had the President been obscured by the sign, Zapruder could have seen none of this. Therefore, the President was hit prior to frame 210, prior to frame 205, the last one that shows the top of his head, and the exact point can probably be reconstructed from another unique quality of the Zapruder footage the Commission saw fit to ignore entirely.

The first 80 pages of Volume 18 are devoted to clips from this film, printed two to a page. These suffer from the reduction in clarity due to the printing process. They had a built-in reduction of distinction because they are printed from black-and-white 35-mm. slides made from 8-mm. color film. Zapruder himself pointed out this known fact to the Commission. Nonetheless, they are almost all pretty clear, although detail has suffered from the extra steps in the processing. Beginning with frame 190, this film suddenly

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becomes fuzzy. Nothing had changed -- the exposure was the same, the sun had not gone behind the clouds and the camera had kept clicking away. As any amateur photographer knows, this clearly means that the change was in Zapruder. He was no longer holding the camera as still. The slight motion imparted to the camera by his emotions at what he saw seems to be the only reasonable explanation for this fuzziness in the film to which the Commission was so completely indifferent. The failure to question Zapruder about this obvious possibility when the Commission had such eminent photographic experts available to it, if it had no amateurs on its staff, reinforces this belief. It was just too obvious to be overlooked. The Commission's work was incredibly sloppy. Its interrogations were puerile. Before long the analyst of its record becomes used to this and even gets to anticipate the pertinent questions that will not be asked. But this omission in the Zapruder testimony is so flagrant it is not susceptible to such explanations. The government had a print of this roll of film in its possession the night of the assassination. It was shown countless times to countless people. The meaning of the failure to ask any questions about the fuzziness of the film or the place represented by "here" is truly shocking.

Zapruder even informed the Commission that he saw the President's waving motion with his hand turn into a grasping at his neck (7H571). He even called to the attention of the Commission something wrong at this precise sequence in the footage (7H573). He had been shown a few frames beginning with 185 and was testifying about them when he said, after looking at 185 and 186, "Yes; this is before -- this shouldn't be there -- the shot wasn't fired was it? You can't tell from here?"

The lack of response from Assistant Counsel Liebler was noted by the court reporter: "Mr. Liebler. (No response)" ↕

Zapruder then continued, "I believe it was closer down here where it happened. Of course, on the film they could see better but you take an 8-mm. and you enlarge it in color or in black and white, you lose a lot of detail. I wish I had an enlarger here for you" (7H573).

His offer was never accepted. The Commission did not want this clarified. He was not even asked anything about the characteristics of his lens or other such elementary technical questions! (pys 46-8).

In what follows, we have already noted that Twyman makes no mention of Ike Altgens or of his famous picture that the Associated Press sent out immediately and all around the world. Not seeing any need for mentioning it, Twyman made no reference to the fact that the Commission used many different versions of that one picture but not a single one of them was of the entire picture. The first use of that entire picture was in *Whitewash II*.

FBI agent Switzer also is not in Twyman's book.