

Mrs. Meagher:

The caption on the Bond photos in the Post say Hargis got a shower of blood, jumped off his cycle and ran up the west end of the incline and climbed into the railroad yard, that he is the officer depicted in the next Bond photos. This is Hargis behind his cycle in the first Bond photo in the Post, but he has suddenly stopped while running toward it from behind. He then must have jumped on it and ridden off. This would accord with his testimony and the fact that in the later Bond photos his cycle is gone from its position in the first one, though an officer is running up the incline. Another cycle was, by the time of the third (or second in Post) Bond photo gone up against the curb. In Willis #6 you can see the cycle in front of the car up against the north curb, right in front of the turnpike sign, and the hat of the officer at the left end of the sign. In Willis #7 and the later Bond photos it is this officer who has climbed the knoll. (Hargis testified that he was never near a picket fence, that he ran back up under a light pole where a man was lying with his child, then ran back to his cycle, got on and rode off under the overpass.) The Mark Bell photo does not, as Life claims, show an officer running toward the knoll. The man shows the badge on the left side of his chest and is running toward the street. This would be Hargis probably who is then caught in midrun coming up behind his cycle in the first Bond photo. This would be in accord with Hargis testimony that he ran back up under the light pole where a man lay with a child, then came back and got on his cycle and rode off. The man running in Bond and Willis up by the picket fence would be Kaygood, according to his testimony. (Hit curb, couldn't make it, ran up knoll toward railroad yard, the cycle against the curb in Willis #6.) And we are still left with the officer who rode halfway up the incline fell off his cycle and ran up the steps, returned in a moment and rode off.

We discussed this matter on the phone once. I am sure you are right that no photos show this. Certainly none I have seen do. But Holland and Bowers who saw the incident from widely different angles described it vividly. The man unmistakably rode up the knoll, and he did it at the same time Hargis came off his cycle. Bowers and Holland pair him with Hargis. In Vol 22, starting p. 833 there are several other vivid descriptions of this and they make it apparent that the man was one of the escort immediately behind the limosine of the President. The man probably rode into the space between the two walls at the top of the steps, and this is why he does not appear in some photos. He went up, I think, between Nix 24 and 66. Zaprunder noticed "motorcycle" officers who left their machines running and ran behind him. Since this was not Hargis who ran behind him, or Kaygood, it must have been this officer. From his perch he would have noticed both the officer and the cycle, if it were at the top of the steps.

I do think it is significant that both the officers riding inside bumper on the limosine belted the motorcycle. And that the one that rode up the knoll has been obscured from the evidence entirely. -In short, I trust Bowers and Holland more than I do the pictures. After all, if Bowers and Holland described so vividly something they did not see, that did not happen, this brings their whole testimony into doubt, including the puff of smoke and the milling cars and men. The ride happened whether the pictures show it or not, in my opinion. None of the photographic evidence in this case is above suspicion; that ought to be abundantly clear, by now.

Mr. Thompson's article is largely speculation, but he so states and that is fair game. I think he makes his point that the throat wound is a fragment wound very tellingly, since apparently there was no metallic residue on the tie or collar. Nevertheless, his contention has one flaw ~~xxxxxxxx~~ serious enough to wreck his theory that such a fragment wound was caused by a head hit. Kennedy was slaying his throat by 227 and there is no evidence of a head wound by that time, nor does Thompson claim so. If it was a fragment wound it must have been caused by the bullet striking the back, which would then have travelled upward and forced out a throat bone. Also, Bennett saw a bullet strike the back after a first "shot" had sounded and so recorded before anyone else knew there was a back wound; yet Thompson still thinks the back wound was the first. I find his psychology leaves something to be desired in regard to the stretcher bullet. That is sheer speculation and psychologically not sound. A souvenir hunter finds a souvenir whose importance he does not at once realize (a bullet!), then instead of keeping it or running hotfoot to the police, he hides it under a stretcher mattress for someone else to get the credit for finding. That kind of speculation leaves the realm of fact to enter that of fiction, a la Manchester, and Penn Jones' red roses.

J. D.