

Comments on "Assassination 1963 - The Citizen and the Critic: A Dialogue in Defense of Conspiracy"

Title seems inaccurate. Is this not a "dialogue in defense of the conspiracy ~~theory~~ theory" rather than in defense of conspiracy itself?

Emperor's New Clothes. Could the author find another illustration of conformity to the non-existent? This one has been used so often that it is now a cliché.

Argument Number Three (bottom of Table of Contents). Statement that "Life Color Picture Proves Conspiracy" is not confirmed by the text.

Pagination should be consecutive throughout. Numbering each section separately makes it difficult for the reader to consult pages earlier and later than the point where he is reading.

Page numbers referring to the Report should use the pages of the official government edition. If the author feels that the Bantam edition will be more accessible to many of his readers, page numbers for both editions could be given.

Introduction, Argument 1, p. 2 (bottom). The Citizen should specifically request the Critic to explain the critical point of view. As this part of the dialogue now stands, the Citizen has never asked the Critic to give any clarification, yet the Critic starts out by laying down ground rules about the kind of questions he will not answer. He takes it for granted that the Citizen wants to carry on the dialogue.

Quotes around "ground rules" are unnecessary. The term is familiar to anyone who will be reading this document.

p. 2, footnote 4. If any possibility is "ignored for the purposes of the dialogue," the author should state exactly why he considers it permissible so to ignore it. Otherwise he seems to be doing what the Commission did; choose not to discuss certain points because they are too much bother, or they have not been thoroughly studied, or they would raise questions that cannot be answered.

"Unbekannt" in dialect.



Capitals, Underlining, and Exclamation Points. The constant use of these to emphasize a word or a phrase soon wearies the reader, and they lose their force. In fact, they weaken the argument, because they create the impression that the reasoning is not strong enough to stand on its own feet and must be propped up by visual devices. The author should remove almost all of them. Any sentence which he then feels is not forceful enough can be recast to get structural emphasis. In a few places of course, underlining is necessary and should be used.

If the author adds capitals or underlining in a passage quoted from another author, that fact should be stated at the end of the quotation; for example, after the quotation from White at the top of page 2, Argument #1.

I take the liberty of adding below an illustration of my comment above. It is a suggested rewording (suggested only) of the paragraph that follows the quotation from White, to remove the underlining and get the emphasis through structure instead:

You can see for yourself what Mr. White is describing if you look at the still pictures taken from Zapruder's film. (These are in Volume 18 of the Hearings and Exhibits.) Let me call your attention to the twelve frames 310 through 321.

In frame 312, which is ~~xxxxxx~~ quite clear, note the position of the President's head. Then note the position of his head in frame 321, which is also clear. In this frame his head has been turned toward the left, and the back of his head is now against the car seat. These two frames were taken only half a second apart, remember.

Some of the intervening frames are clearer than others, but as a series they show a consistent and unmistakable decrease in the distance between the back of the President's head and the car seat behind him. From frame to frame that distance gets smaller and smaller.

This rapidly diminishing distance can have only one interpretation: during the half-second between frames 312 and 321, the President's head was thrust violently backwards.

The last four words of the above might be underlined, but I would think that nothing else in the passage would need it. Incidentally, it might be helpful to the reader to mark that "diminishing distance" on the stills themselves in some way.

Argument #1, page 7, 10th line from bottom. Suggest "Nope" be changed to "No."

Slang has no place in a document as serious and important as this one.

Argument #2, bottom of page 4 and top of page 5. In frame 213 I distinctly see three black lines. (The third one in 212 is, I believe, structural in the sign, but that is different from the third line in 213.)

To show what is meant by "oscillating with a decreasing amplitude," will it not be necessary to show all the frames through 222?

Speaking only for myself, I find this argument involving the back of the sign and the postulated hole in it the least satisfactory; with all of the other reasoning by the author I ~~xxxxxx~~ find very powerful, but this fails to carry conviction. Two questions of fact:

- (1) Is there any testimony that anyone heard the sign being struck by a bullet? The Chisms were nearest the sign. Does a bullet penetrating metal at a high velocity make a characteristic noise?
- (2) I understand that it cannot be determined from any testimony just when the sign was removed. But if the sign were removed to conceal the existence of the hole, wouldn't this have to have been done very soon indeed after the assassination? I find it hard to believe that such a hole, in such a place, could have escaped notice even for a few hours.

Argument #2, page 2, handwritten footnote. I confess that I find it difficult to see the film cement and horizontal line indicating clear celluloid underhang on frame 207. Might there be arrows here?

Pictures in one place. Having a picture adjacent to the text describing it is advantageous during the first reading. But in rechecking a point the reader may have trouble finding the picture again; and also if a picture is referred to in several places in the text. If the author prefers not to assemble all the pictures in the middle of the article or at the back, then the reader should be told, ~~xx~~ when the picture is referred to again, that it is "facing page 16," or whatever. But one location for all would be more convenient, in my opinion.

Diagram 1. The first frame number shown is 207, the last is 240, a difference of 34 ~~11~~ frames if both the beginning and ending frames are included. But the caption includes the figure "42 frames." Also, the meaning of the "7" at lower left is not clear.

"The Commission determined ..." I cannot find the note of the page where this phrase was used, but I recall that it seemed clear that the wording should be: "The Commission claims to have determined ...". Since the Commission can hardly be said to have determined anything at all at any time, I suggest that ~~this~~ the author watch out for "determined" throughout the paper and always distinguish between what they say they found out and what they actually did - or more often, didn't - find out.

Aerial View. This excellent illustration is especially helpful to the reader when it carries both the number of the witness and his name. Could the arrows be made a little clearer? The X used for the assassination spot was a little confusing to me until I recognized that it was not part of the dark mass (tree?) behind it.

In the key, I suggest that after Nix, Muchmore, and Campbell the note be added (no testimony), unless references in the Hearings and Exhibits are to be added later.

This suggests a second copy of the Aerial View, this one showing the location of all the witnesses who never testified.