

October 13, 1965

The Honorable J. Lee Rankin
36 W. 44th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Yesterday afternoon a graduate student in the Physics Department here at UCLA walked into my office to discuss some work he and others have been doing on the Report. He had several interesting theories, supporting evidence for which he promised to provide in the future. He did make one point, however, during the course of the conversation that I think deserves some attention.

He noted that frames 208-211 of the Zapruder film are not included in Commission Exhibit 885. There is a jump from frame 207 to frame 212 on page 19 of Volume 18 of the Exhibits.

These frames show the President's car entering the area in which it was obscured by the sign behind which we concluded he had been shot first. You will note that the back of the sign is clearly visible in the frames prior to No. 207 and that no marks of any kind appear on it. On frame 212, however, two curved lines appear on the back of the sign. These lines are visible in succeeding frames and appear to lengthen. The lines are such that it appears that they might intersect at some point on the sign. Unfortunately, their possible point of intersection is obscured at frame 212 and thereafter by the sprocket hole in the film.

The hypothesis was offered that a bullet had struck the sign between frame 207 and frame 212 and might have been visible on those frames had they been included in the Exhibit. Since Oswald could not have fired fast enough to have hit the sign with one shot at frame 208 and the President with another shot before frame 225 when the President came out from behind the sign, the notion is advanced that someone else must have been firing at the President too.

October 13, 1963

I note that frame 210 is included as a part of Commission Exhibit 003. That is, I can see of the sign, no marks have appeared on it at that time. The first frame at which they could possibly have appeared, therefore, is 211, which falls within the 210-212 range in which the first shot was most likely fired. It may well be, therefore, that a fragment may have hit the sign, although that seems extremely unlikely from the location of the sign and the fact that the first bullet most likely went through the President and the Governor and came to rest substantially whole inside the car.

Our physician major critic explains the marks on the sign as follows: Energy was transmitted to the sign by the impact of the bullet. This energy caused the surface of the sign to vibrate light waves in a pattern similar to that which actually does appear on the sign. I personally have no way of knowing whether this is correct or not, but it seems plausible to me.

If my recollection is correct, the sign was removed some time following the assassination. My recollection is based on the fact that it did not appear in pictures taken of the Lincoln Plaza at some point after the assassination. I have no recollection that anybody considered what happened to the sign or that anybody was aware of the fact that the frames were omitted or that there were peculiar marks on the back of the sign.

It may be that either Norman or Edward, to whom I am referring in some of this letter, may be familiar with the points I have raised. It does seem to me, however, that it was unfortunate that the frames were omitted without explanation. Apparently the people who discovered this absence have consulted somebody and after some talking and hauling, he told them that the frames were omitted because they were damaged. This is obviously not so since 210 is included in CE 003.

If there is a ready explanation for the omission of the frames and the appearance of the marks on the back of the sign, I would certainly be relieved to know what it is. If there is none, I think it would be appropriate for us to raise this matter formally with the F.B.I. Since Life Magazine has the original film, they might be able to tell us what happened on the frames that are missing from the Exhibit volume. I talked to Al Goldberg this morning, and he agrees that the matter should be cleared up.

Everything is going well here and I am enjoying my work very much,

Most sincerely,


Wesley J. Liebeler

cc: Mr. A. Goldberg
Prof. Norman Rockwell
Mr. Howard P. Williams

WJL:dt