MAy 3, 1969

Dear Sylvia,

I have been very busy, and have not much time to write.

This is just to let you know that we did finally get a copy of the Z film, of the same generation and clarity as the one Ray has, but not the same one. Its been projected a few times--- in New Orleans, I think--- and so it has a few scratches. But for all practical purposes, it will do fine to document Fred's research.

When time permits, I'd like to tell you more about what is being done. We are making up a slide set, and special color plates (8 by 10) of those areas of the film strip where the splices were discovered. It takes a considerable amount of know-how to set up an optical system which can turn an 8mm color frame into a clear 35 mm slide. Its just not at all a standard procedure. The 8mm market is a home-movie/amateure photographer market. There is no equipment on sale that does this sort of thing. There is a fellow out here, who used to head a photo lab XXXXX at the China Lake Naval Station. He has access to certain equipment and has rigged up a setup, at home, which will do this. Were he not retired, and interested in the case, he could easily charge $250 a day for his time for what he has done. He not only knows his optics, but, in designing a rig to do this, he has to use such things as alathe, drill presses, etc. The only cost we have right now is the cost of color film to load the 35mm camera with. At 18 frames per second, there are about 500 exposures that must be made----in color---to get a complete slide set that includes the end of the film, where Zapruder pans the knoll.

Without going into details, there now exist a limited number of 8mm color copies of this film. They have been chopped up and put on little 2½" home-size movie reels, with two complete Z films on each reel. XXXXXXXXXXXXXX They are available for $10 apiece (one reel, with two complete runthroughs, each identical, and separated from one another by about 2 feet of blank film).

Two complete runthroughs means you can clip the second one off and save it, or only project the first one; or if one gets accidentally damaged in projection, you still have the other etc. This is only being made available to people who are known and can be trusted. The income from it will be used to finance the very high cost of the color film that will be needed to make up the color plates and slide sets, which should run somewhere around $200.

When time permits, and there is nogreat rush on this, I have quite a bit to tell you about this film. I am now quite skeptical about the whole missing frame story at Life. I now feel that the 212 splice is no different than any of the other splices in this butchered film, except that it accidentially got published, and Life had to make up a story to cover it, and fast. I think Tink bought Life's story without going to the source and XXXX actually locating and interviewing the persons present when the film was allegedly broken. This film not only has the missing frames with material betweenthe sprocket holes, but the segment 206-212 has a splice at each end (a photographic splice, of course) of the segment; And the intervening frames (206-212), come from an entirely different copy (the background is magenta instead of bluish) within the segment

(ie frames 206-212) than without (212 and on up; 206 and on down).

In fact the whole film is made of alternating "pink" and "blue" segments. Where the pink meets the blue, on close examination, reveals a (photographic) splice!

It is this feature of the splicing that precludes innocent explanation.

It is as if you had a light copy of the Altgens photo, and a dark copy. If you then took the left hand copy of the light copy, and pasted it to the right hand side of the dark copy, you'd have something much more sinister than merely an altgens picture which may have been accidentially torn and pasted together again along the tear. You'd have two separate copies in existance, a piece of each of which was used to make the whole---which is then parading around pupporting to be the "original".

To extend the analogy to the Z film, just keep in mind that a lightly developed film will be sort of pinkish; whereas a darkly developed one will be bluish.

Across each of Fred's splices, one goes from a"pinkish" segment to a"blu sh" segment. Which means that at some point in the history of the film, two copies were made, they differed slightly in contrast, and va ious segments from these two copies were pasted together, and the result rephotographed and given to Life as the "original". (Unless Life's original actually contains mechanical splices, which would be qu te incriminating).

To argue that any of this is an accident is to say that someone made two copies of Life's unaltered , unspliced original, cut them up, left out frames, pasted them together, and then the result, whennumbered, matches up with the numbering in the volumes. To claim that all this innocently happened at Life is to claim that they are a bunch of bumbling, incompetant, photographic butchers.

I've been dealing with this stuff for abou a week now; film just does not break that easily. Their whole story seems utterly absurd to me. Besides, they claim that their missing frames are really missing! And have published the four, in a news release, that they say are the only ones that exist! How, then, can they explain the ones on this copy, of which we are making beautiful color plates, with material between the sprocket holes? And ifthey reply that, well, this was a copy made at Life before the film was broken, then how-come there are other splices? Over which the numb ing matches? And what about the two-tone nature of this 8mm film, across each splice? You can see what a bind they are in. There is something very intriguing going on here, which Tink Thompson, with his tendancy to accept "innocent explanations" lost a golden opportunity to unravel.

Anyway, if you're interested, send $10. I'll write more. I'm working very hard on my own thing, generating lots of first draft.

Regards,

David