

Sylvia

11818-1/2 Dorothy St.,
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April 4, 1969

Mr. Ray Marcus
1249 Hi Point
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Dear Ray,

In mid-February, Fred Newcomb told me of the research he had done on an 8mm copy of the Zapruder film that he had in his possession the previous December, and which he had obtained from Stephen Jaffe, who in turn had obtained it from LaMarre. I am thoroughly acquainted with that research, and possess a set of his original notes, the frame-by-frame commentary which you were mailed while back East. I think Fred's work, regarding the splicing of the Zapruder film, represents one of the most stunning discoveries that has been made in this entire case. If true, it proves the existence of a conspiracy that was able to intercept and alter the Zapruder film between the time Zapruder took his movie, and the time it came into Life Magazine's possession. Of all the photo doctoring in this case, it is surely the most significant, in its implications about a conspiracy.

I am fully acquainted with what has happened, and about how Fred trusted you with the 8mm copy of the Zapruder film in December, when a tight situation developed and there was a problem as to whether or not he could keep control of that film.

Four months have passed. I feel that your refusal to return the film by now represents an unreasonable obstruction to the completion of this important research, an obstruction which I hope you will remove without any unnecessary further delay.

The most important thing about the newly discovered splices which Fred discovered is that they are self-authenticating. The fact that the numbering of the film matches up, frame by frame, over the published portions of what Life and the authorities are calling a copy of the original Z film proves that the splicing preceded the numbering. This is explained quite clearly in the memo dated March 15, 1969, which I helped write.

The argument is simple. It is explained in the clearest possible terms. If there remain any questions whatsoever in this area, do not hesitate to ask them.

This argument makes completely irrelevant the motives of the people who are connected with how that particular 8mm copy of the Zapruder film, which you now have, got from France to the U.S. I am referring, of course, to Jaffe and LaMarre. You have the right to your opinions about these people, their character, their motives, and whether or not either or both of them are possibly being used by others. But the fact that the splices are self-authenticating happens to make such matters quite irrelevant. Similarly, questions such as "how do you know that Jaffe did not put the splices there?" are simply not valid. It is clear that the splices had to be there before the frames were numbered by the FBI in the creation of CE 885 for the Warren Commission.

I would be most curious to know of any "innocent explanation" that could possibly account for Fred's discoveries, which will not, in the process raise a good many more questions than it could possibly answer, in view of the documented record which now exists on this subject. Furthermore, the idea that these splices are in unpublished portions of the film in no way diminishes the value or importance of information in published (and presumably untampered with) portions of the film. That distinction is quite obvious: it takes no great amount of sophistication to be made. If Fred's discoveries are true, they can only hurt the opposition.

I think it is important that this whole matter be worked out as soon as possible, so that Fred's work can be completed. Also, I think that dupes should be made of that 8mm copy for research use (that 8mm copy is the best copy, as you probably know) and that slide sets should be prepared for general research use.

In the service of working this out, I am a believer in a full dialogue on this subject. Letters take a long time to write. Its ridiculous that we should be speaking to the same people 3000 miles away, on expensive long distance phone calls, but not be communicating with each other across town. What are we, international powers communicating through a "swiss embassy"? I think you, Letha, Fred, Marlyn, and I should get together at some location for an exchange of views on this whole thing. Defending ones views on matters like this will bring out the strengths and weaknesses. Also, I think that a dialogue will lessen suspicion.

Do you think its fair that Fred should get back a scribbled note to his letter of March 16 telling him that "For reasons which I deem valid, I will not offer you a detailed explanation---which in any event would not satisfy you"? Or that he be told that he should go communicate with Gary Schoener, across the country, who will then relate to him what he (Gary) was told by Vincent Salandria who, in turn, presumably is the possessor your reasons for not returning the film?

And do you think its fair that the last time Fred should have personally seen you was when you walked out of his home, in December, carrying the finest copy of the Zapruder film that exists, besides those at Life, and that his research discoveries should now be aborted at your whim, and by your sole edict, for reasons which you apparently deem valid, but don't care to explain?

There is probably no discovery that Fred will make on this whole case that will compare in importance with this material. Besides my personal conviction of its ultimate importance to this case, I am appalled by what I believe to be your needlessly cruel and unfair actions against him, as a human being, and in squelching and truncating the best of his creative endeavors, so that it does not see the light of day.

How would you have reacted if, having become convinced of the importance of the "#5 man image" after having discovered it, you were prevented by another from doing any work with copies of that picture, because the only available copies----which your efforts turned up-----were not returned to you by another who hinted that such an image, if it indeed existed, must have been planted there, so that it might be found, and then hurt the cause of the critics?

Your feelings regarding Jaffe, LaMarre, and Farewell America are, I'm sure, quite strong. I never saw the film, but I understand that Fred shares many of the same feelings about what was included, how it got there, and how it could have jeopardized what was then the impending New Orleans trial against Clay Shaw. And I can well understand the bad taste it must leave in your mouth to have been threatened with legal action by LaMarre, to the extent that the police were actually called in on the case. But can you forget the fact that it is Fred Newcomb who was responsible for turning up that film, and actually making it available? And that it was Fred's refusal to sign any complaint whatsoever that kept you from being arrested??

But all of this is past. And, most important, none of it makes those splices any less self-authenticating, or his work---for those very reasons---any less important. What has one got to do with the other?? Whether Jaffe is an angel, a dupe, or an agent----internal evidence proves the splices preceded the numbering. Thats what makes them significant. Its that simple.

Changing the subject slightly, I would like to address myself to a slightly more general question. In investigating the assassination, we have all had to deal with material which is not at all of an everyday nature. Suspicion can be a very good starting point for a scientist, but it is only a starting point. One must have strict rules of evidence. What I am getting at is the behavior which results when suspicion is allowed to run rampant and get out of control and all sight of evidence is lost. Specifically, if everytime one observes "black", one's reaction is to suspect it of being "white in disguise", and everytime one sees "white", that, in turn, is suspect of being "black in disguise", one ends up with no reality, only a bunch of theories about what is suspected of being disguised as what. There are only a bunch of deceptive appearances out there in world, but no substance. And so, when authentic substance is encountered, like those splices, which are self-evident and self-authenticating they are simply suspected of being something meant to mislead, somehow disguised as something that looks very good.

We have to always come back to solid evidence. If all evidence that was found was, a priori, rejected because of the fear that "someone put this there so that I might find it", what progress could be made? There will always be the tendency, no matter what discovery is made, to ask "How can this incriminating evidence possibly exist?" No matter what the discovery is, there is always that question. Attempting to answer such a question can frequently shed light on circumstances which faced a conspiracy that weekend (11/22/63) and which forced them to act in some way which in turn led to the production of the evidence which appears to-good-to-be-true; but such conjecturing and theorizing will never impeach the validity of the evidence, if it is real. In any quest for knowledge, each new discovery will always raise some additional unanswered questions; that is the nature of the process.

Forget the splices. Take, for example, the question of the Zapruder film. Why does it even exist? Sound like a silly question, because we all take the film for granted? Not at all. My suspicion is that that film represents one huge fluke on someones' part that day in Dealey Plaza. Not only did Zapruder take those pictures from that angle, with color film, using a telephoto lens; he was then quickly in contact with the major media, to such an extent that it was impossible to argue that the film didn't turn out, or that he had his lens cover on etc. The point is, by asking the question, we usually get into conjecture regarding what happened on Nov 22, 1963, and usually learn how some particular situation got out of control for the other side, producing incriminating evidence?

Example 2. Why do the 26 volumes exist? Remember how we used to speculate about that one?

Example 3. Why was CE 885 published? It could have been put in the archives as an exhibit, greatly limiting the potential for frame-by-frame analysis of the type that you did so early on.

The point is, none of these questions are going to impeach the validity of a solid argument, grounded in reason.

This is true be it the Commission's motives in publishing evidence which impeaches their own Report, or Jaffe/LaMarre motives in bringing that 8mm film over here, and its ending up in Fred's hands, despite their connection with Farewell America.

I recently came across the following quote which quite amused me, because of its source and its relevance to the present situation.

" When one deliberately misleads, sometimes friend as well as foe is misled. And later the deceiver may not be believed when he wishes to be...Often the very fear of deception has blinded an opponent to the real value of the information which accidents or intelligence operations have placed in his hands.

(quote continued on next page)

" (continuing)....

As Sir Walter Scott wrote:

'Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

If you suspect an enemy of constant trickery, then almost anything that happens can be taken as one of his tricks. A collateral effect of deception, once a single piece of deception has succeeded in its purpose, is to upset and confuse the opponent's judgment and evaluation of other intelligence he may receive. He will be suspicious and distrustful. He will not want to be caught off guard."

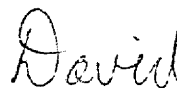
The above, Ray, was written by Allen Dulles in his book "The Craft of Intelligence". It is from a chapter entitled: "Confusing the Adversary". (p.153)

I can't think of a better, more succinct way of stating the problem. I think Dulles' advice to you, if he were around and were he a Warren Report critic, would be to urge you to return the film to Fred Newcomb, and stop looking a gift horse in the face.

Each day, each week, each month that passes by represents just more delay before Fred's important work can be completed.

Its not a very pleasant record to leave behind, and, given the demonstrable validity of his research, I wouldn't want to have to defend such actions very much longer.

Sincerely yours,



David S. Lifton

P.S. To prevent any possibility of accident, I am of the strong opinion that the only reason light should be shone through the frames of the 8mm copy should be for the purpose of using that copy to generate duplicates, slides, and exhibits for Fred's research. I hope that you are not projecting it. Should there be any accident whatsoever and the film be broken at anypoint, that indeed would create confusion by causing new splices to exist.

I say this only because I'm sure there are occasions when you might want to view the thing in motion. We now have available 16mm copies---one or two generations worse than your copy---for that purpose. But it is of sufficient quality to see such things as the head-snap etc. The 8mm copy would obviously produce a higher quality copy than those now on hand, another reason why it should be made available.