

4640 NOBLE AVENUE
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA
91403

March 16, 1969

Mr. Ray Marcus
1249 Hi Point Street
Los Angeles, California
90035

Dear Ray,

Enclosed please find a preliminary Memo, dated March 15, 1969, which covers the essential point that is raised by my work with the 8mm copy of the Z film, which you now have.

Based on the work that I did during the brief time that I had the film over here, this memo explains the reasoning behind the basic conclusions --- that what Life calls (and what the Warren Commission admitted into evidence as a copy of) the "original Z film" is in fact an altered version of what is truly the original. The implications of this are also discussed. To complete this work, and prepare the necessary photographic exhibits to back up this hypothesis, it is essential that I have access to that 8mm copy again.

I have to be able to make color photos of the splices that I discovered between frame 1 and 171. Because these splices occur between frames on the film, this photo work has to be done in a regular photo darkroom on an enlarger which would be rigged up, through an adapter, to hold segments of the film strip (without, of course, cutting the film). An 8 or 16mm copy of the 8mm copy you now have may well be useless for this specific purpose because, in a great many cases, labs which make 8mm duplicates use machines which mask out the area between the frames (as well as sometimes the area between the sprocket holes.) It all depends on the machine used by the lab.

I urge you to return the copy you obtained from me so I can complete my work, check it carefully, and circulate it to other serious critics of the case for their examination and criticism. The work can then stand or fall on its own merits, before a jury of my peers. I have no intention of recklessly publishing anything that would hurt anyone, or which a careful recheck indicates to be faulty.

But I urge you to return the film so that the work can be completed, and then judged on its own merits, and not be aborted and prevented from being finished at this early stage. Because of a fear you have that this is a planted version of the film which should not be made available for research use.

PAGE TWO - RAY MARCUS

I think this memo completely deals with the problem of when the splices were made on the film. Please read it carefully. It tries to explain why any splices that appear on this film before frame 171 are self-authenticating, because the numbering in succeeding frames matches up with the published portions of the film in Volume 18. I hope you give this your fullest attention; this is the crucial point.

Of course, we do not know the complete history of this copy of the Z film, and there may well be "decoy" alterations on it (such as, possibly, the rather obvious published splice at frame 212) as well as "authentic" and sinister "before the fact" alterations, made in order to conceal information from all future viewers of this film.

But without access to the film, nothing can be checked, and no progress can be made at all. Also, I think it would be unwise to assume, from the start, that all visible alterations on the film are of a "decoy" nature, meant to mislead researchers, and to prevent any work from being done with it on that basis alone.

One other thing. As you have said in the past, it would be a tremendous service to make available copies of the Z film for private use, to other serious researchers.

I have a contact that is willing to duplicate the Z film, for about \$5.00 a piece; also, another contact is willing to make 35mm slides of any or all frames for about 29¢ a piece.

The film contact is safe and reliable. I have already used it to make a few working copies of a 16mm version of the Z film I have, but the quality is one or two generations poorer, compared to the 8mm copy you have, and it is a shame to even be dealing with this 16mm version when the 8mm copy exists. I think the 8mm version is the parent, of some generation, of the 16mm copy.

Anyway, whatever copy the 16mm was made from, it was made on a machine that "reframes" when duplicating, so that all material between the frames has been lost, so it is useless for the purposes of illustrating my research.

Ray, we have waited for a long time before a break like this occurred, and the Z film became available, in some form. For years, it could not be gotten away from LIFE. Now, at this time, an 8mm version - the best available that I know of - is in your possession. Please, in the service of furthering research on this case, make the film available to me so I may complete my research, and so that a limited number of duplicates may be made for other serious researchers and students, as well as appropriate slide sets.

PAGE THREE - RAY MARCUS

The decision is yours. I think that you will be making a terrible mistake if you convince yourself that the best thing to do with that film is what LIFE has been doing for years, and just sit on it.

Please let me hear from you as soon as possible on this, so that we can work out some mutually acceptable arrangement which permits the study and safe duplication of the 8mm copy you now have.

Sincerely,



FRED T. NEWCOMB

FTN:mkn

Enclosure