

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH ON ZAPRUDER FILM

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The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze a new item of evidence, hertofore unavailable, which shows that what the Warren Commission and Life Magazine call the "original Zapruder film" of the assassination of President Kennedy was altered and spliced in several places, before this "original" was ever turned over to Life Magazine, who purchased the film from Zapruder for over \$40,000 on the weekend of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Two main topics will be discussed in this paper:

Part I (and Appendix A): a discussion of some hertofore unavailable film which shows the existance of splices and alterations in unpublished portions of what Life Magazine bought for \$150,000 and calls "the original Zapruder film." Implications of this are also discussed.

Part II: A discussion of the possible significance of the specific alterations (such as deleted sequences of frames, art work on particular series of frames, some of which have been published)

Most important of all, however, is Part I, with its conclusions that the Zapruder film was altered before it was turned over to Life Magazine on the weekend of the assassination, in what was supported to be a normal purchase by a corporation of an unusual motion picture film from a private individual, who happened to take a film of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Part I: The existance of splices on what Life, the FBI, and the Warren Commission call "the original Zapruder film"

Life Magazine purchased what is supposed to be the original Zapruder film -- ie: the original pristine uncut version -- from Abraham Zapruder on the weekend of the assassination. (Zapruder donated \$25,000 of his proceeds from the sale to a fund for patrolman J. D. Tippit. One Warren Commission member estimated that Life paid Zapruder as much as \$500,000 for the film. The contract shows that he actually received \$150,000.)

Within one week, frames from this film were published, in black and white and in color, all over the United States and the world. It is the most important film of the assassination, because it is focused on the ~~infixidmax~~ occupants of the car, and shows their reaction to the individual bullets which struck. For this reason, it is essential to any reconstruction of the assassination. The portions of this film preceding the appearance of the Presidential limousine show certain portions of the motorcade which preceded the limousine, such as escort motorcycles. Later portions of this film (after the shooting, when the car has disappeared from view under the underpass) show the grassy knoll to the right of Zapruder.

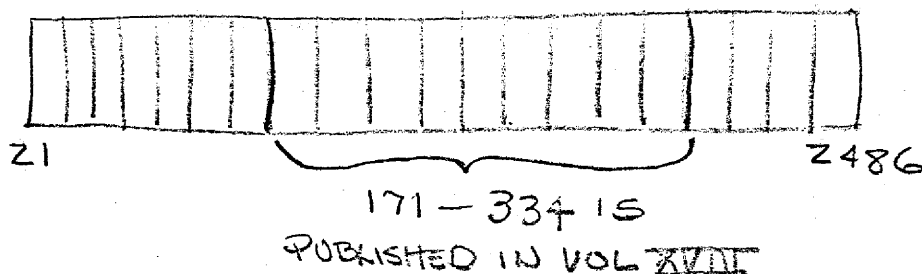
Life Magazine made available to the FBI a slide set made from individual frames of what it calls the 'original Zapruder film' from its New York office. Ignoring family sequences that were also on this film, the FBI numbered the slides made from the film by assigning the number "1" to the first frame on the film which shows the lead motorcycles coming into view. The numbers are then assigned sequentially through about frame 486, which is the last exposed frame ~~xxxxxxx~~ on the strip of film.

(See the testimony of FBI photographic expert Shaneyfelt, who numbered the slides, and explained the numbering as follows: (insert))

Of the frames numbered from "0" to the end of the film, the subsequence from frame 171 to frame 334 is of particular importance. The 171-to-334 subsequence was prepared by the FBI for the Warren Commission as a booklet (which contains certain other frames from other movies) and this booklet of film frames, 2 to a page, was printed in volume 18 of the Warren Commission's 26 volumes of Hearing and Exhibits (as Commission Exhibit 885).

Thus, the Warren Commission has published a subsequence of frames from "the original Zapruder film" which extends from a frame on the film which was assigned the number 171 (by the FBI) to the one numbered 334. It is important to reemphasize that this published subsequence (171-334) is only a portion of the entire film, whose FBI-assigned frame numbers start at "1" and run through about: 486

Fig. 1



#### THE NEW EVIDENCE

The new evidence is a copy of the Zapruder film.

Specific details of how this particular copy was obtained cannot be revealed; more will be said towards the end of this paper. What is clear is that this copy (henceforth called "the available copy") was made from a copy of the film at Life Magazine. It is definitely the Zapruder film of the assassination of President Kennedy. The available copy contains no mechanical splices of any type; it is one continuous strip of film.

In considering the authenticity of this available copy of the Zapruder film, the following information is relevant.

Zapruder testified that before the motorcade appeared, he took several personal shots of his secretary, on Dealey Plaza. This available copy contains those shots.

After these preliminary shots of a personal nature appears the first frame of the film in which the camera is pointed at the corner of Houston and Elm: 3 motorcycles can be seen, heading down Houston towards Elm.

The following test was performed to see if this available copy of the film was actually an authentic copy of the Zapruder film which Life possesses, and which was used as the "parent" of the copy it gave to the FBI and Warren Commission.

As previously stated, the FBI assigned to the first frame showing the motorcycle sequence (referred to above) the frame number "1". So, similarly, the first frame on the available copy was numbered "1". The film was then carefully examined using a manual viewer (a device which permits a frame by frame inspection of a motion picture film, by manual cranking the film through a lens and light source which provides a picture of each frame on a small screen.)

The frames were counted. Starting with the first frame, the film was cranked to the 171st frame. The frame on the screen was then compared with the frame labeled 171, published in Volume 18 on Page 1. The frames were identical. The next frame, the 172nd on the film was then compared with frame 172, as published in Volume 18. Again, the frames were identical. In this manner, the entire film was checked, from the 171st frame, through the 334th frame, against the subsequence of frames published in the volumes: frames 171-334.

The available copy was found to agree for every frame. (For example: the 313th frame of the available copy is the famous "frame 313" head-shot, in which President Kennedy is struck in the head by the fatal bullet.)

(Footnote: the reproduction in volume 18 omits frames 208-212: this fact is indicated in the caption. The available copy examined has these four missing frames, including the material between the sprocket holes, further evidence that it is an authentic copy of the film Life has stored in its safe in New York City, and that the available copy was made before Life broke the film at that point. (There is no splice in the film, as there is in Volume 18 in this area.))

The available copy, then, has the property that it agrees with what Life, the FBI, and the Warren Commission all call "frames from the original Zapruder film" over the entire published subsequence (171-to-334) of such frames, and does so when the first "motorcycle escort frame" is assigned the number "1".

On the assumption that Life Magazine did not intentionally deceive the Warren Commission when it gave it a slide set purportedly the original, and on the assumption that the FBI lab (and particularly photo expert Shaneyfelt) did not perjure himself when describing that film and setting up the numbering system for the slide set he received from Life, there is no reason to doubt the fact that the slide sequence published in Volume 18 are correctly numbered frames from a faithful copy of what Life calls "the original Zapruder film."

Since the available copy agrees, frame by frame, with the subsequence of these published frames (171-334) it is concluded that the available copy is also a faithful copy (although of unspecified generation) of what Life calls "the original Zapruder film".

#### SPLICES VISIBLE IN THE AVAILABLE COPY

It is shocking to learn, then, that a visual examination of this strip of film, called the available copy, shows that although there is no single mechanical splice along its length, it clearly reveals several

very obvious "photographic splices" (ie: pictures of splices that existed on some parent film from which the available copy was made). These photographic splices occur in the film between the frame numbered "1" and the start of the published subsequence (ie: frame 171).

It will now be argued that these splices, (with their particular deleted subsequences) must have been made before the film was given to Life Magazine on the weekend of the assassination. Here is why. To assume otherwise is to say that Life prepared a spliced and altered copy of the original film, and that when the US government (through the FBI and the Warren Commission) requested copies of the original film and slide sets prepared from the original film for use in its investigation, Life then supplied the FBI and the Warren Commission with duplicate films made from the sloppily spliced copy, and slide sets also made from this copy, instead of supplying materials from its original, as requested.

It is highly improbable, almost inconceivable, that Life, would give the FBI and the Commission anything but slides and duplicates from the original it bought, when requested to do so by the FBI AND By a Presidential Commission. To do otherwise was to risk the displeasure of the highest government authorities, the issuance of a subpoena for the production of its original, and perhaps the permanent acquisition by the government of the original.

However, one may disagree with Life's handling of the film, it is not fair to make them part of a plot to deceive the FBI/and/or Warren Commission (or even co-conspirators with either of these two parties in the service of a coverup) without direct evidence to go on to make such a charge. )

Yet the splices exist. They are grotesque and obvious. (See Appendix A for descriptions and photographic exhibits being prepared: for example, contact prints made from the film strip illustrating the various splices). Actual splice lines can be seen in the frames. (Their main effect would be to cut out those sections of the Zapruder film which show the early portions of the motorcade, police cars, and cycles preceding the President (the pilot car, the lead car, which contained Chief Curry and Sheriff Decker, etc.)

Furthermore, the result of the splices is that, on the "original Zapruder film" the Presidential limousine is never seen making a turn onto Houston, from Main; or even coming down Houston, or even turning onto Elm from Houston! (All this, despite the fact that Abraham Zapruder testified: (insert))

Instead, after a few brief subsequences which show motorcycles, the view of this "original film" is suddenly treated to the sight of the Presidential limousine, materializing before his eye in Elm Street, already about 75 feet past the School Book Depository Building (!) as if suddenly brought into existence by someone who rubbed Alladin's lamp. (Incidentally, no splice was detected at this point in the film. The FBI told the commission that this is where Zapruder started filming, despite the fact that Zapruder says he followed the motorcade down Houston.) Then, as if given a rocket boost by an invisible JATO (Jet Assist Take Off) unit, the car jumps forward almost a full 6 feet in Elm Street! (An examination of the available copy at this point shows an obvious and grotesque splice (this is around frame 150) which appears at this point in the film, and accounts for the 6 foot jump of the Presidential automobile down Elm Street. This splice, as well as others, is discussed in Appendix A.)

What is important about each of those splices, whether it is 6 frames deleted, 2 frames or 1 frame, is that each splice only causes intervening frames to be deleted. It is clear, from a visual examination of the film on the viewer, that at no time were any frames added to this film. Each splice represents a deletion or alteration of some sort. What is amazing, then, is that this available copy, as personally examined by me, in the viewer (see Appendix A) has the property that despite the fact that it contains \_\_\_ splices between the first frame (numbered "1") and the start of the published subsequence (frames 171-334), the carefully examined available copy agrees in every respect, frame by frame, with what proports to be copy of the original, as published in Volume 18, over the subsequent published subsequence (171-334).

(The point is this. Had the available copy had several splices that were merely peculiar to some particular parent copy, but not to what Life, the FBI and the Warren Commission calls "the original Zapruder film", it would be an incredible coincidence if it was then possible to number the first frame "1" (just as the FBI did with their copy of the "original") count 171 frames, and then find that the 171<sup>st</sup> frame on the "available film" agrees with the one published as frame 171 by the Warren Commission in Volume 18, that frame 313 agrees, and in fact the whole published subsequence agrees!!)

THE FACT THAT THERE ARE THREE SPLICES IN THIS FILM BEFORE THE PUBLISHED SUBSEQUENCES---SPLICES WHICH DELETE DIFFERING AMOUNTS OF FRAMES IN EACH CASE---AND THAT THIS FILM STILL AGREES with the published subsequence of what the COMMISSION, LIFE AND THE FBI CALL THE "ORIGINAL ZAPRUDER FILM" IS POWERFUL CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT THE "ORIGINAL" ZAPRUDER FILM<sup>9</sup> POSSESSED BY LIFE MAGAZINE CONTAINS THESE VERY SAME SPLICES BETWEEN FRAME 1 AND FRAME 171.

This would mean that the "original Zapruder film" that Life has is not the original at all, but an altered copy for which Life paid a small fortune, and which Life must know is not an authentic original.

The only way that direct evidence could be developed that what Life calls the "original Zapruder film" has these very same splices would be for Life to remove this film from its vault, and make it available for inspection on a manual viewing device.

Another way would be for Life to make a copy of this "original Zapruder film", certify that it is a true copy of its original, and make that copy available for inspection.

There is every reason to believe that the available copy is a true and faithful copy of what Life calls the original Zapruder film, made so early (either late 1963 or early 1964) that the film has not yet acquired the splice (at frame 207) which appears in Volume 18.

My examination of this film revealed, in effect, that what Life, the Warren Commission, and the FBI have been calling the "original Zapruder film" is not at all an original.

For the purpose of this paper, it has been assumed that there was no perjury on the part of the FBI when it told the Warren Commission that what it gave them was what Life said was a copy of the original Zapruder film. Furthermore, it is assumed that Life had no reason to deceive the FBI, and provided that agency with a true and faithful copy of the "original film" it purchased from Zapruder when requested to

do so by the Commission. (If either of these assumptions are false, it does not change any of the facts concerning the existence of the splices. It would then simply be true that Life is the organization which altered the film. As stated before, this is very doubtful; though it is a possibility.)

What seems more likely, however, is that Life bought whatever it could get its hands on of this priceless film, which then turned out to be a butchered and altered version of what was once the authentic and original Zapruder film.

Life then published frames from this film, and never said anything about the fact that the entire sequence contained certain splices.

THE QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD NOW BE ASKED:ARE:

1. Why isn't the Zapruder film in the condition it purported to be in (an uncut unaltered original) a condition it should have been in if treated with any modicum of care, given its obvious value? Who altered the Zapruder film before it could be purchased from Zapruder?
2. Who had the film that weekend? What is the precise chain of possession on the film from the time it was exposed in Zapruder's camera, to the time Life took possession of the film and the copy it bought?
3. Why hasn't Life, a major picture magazine, admitted the fact that it bought a copy of a film which, despite the fact that it purports to be original, has many frames missing and has several splices in it?
4. The splices in this film are so obvious that, at the very least, Life Magazine is an accessory after the fact to the alteration of the Zapruder film.
5. Furthermore, the FBI is implicated in not explicitly reporting to the Warren Commission, that a frame by frame examination of this film (which it did for months, in working out the reconstruction) a film which purported to be a copy of an original, exhibits        crude splices over an interval of less than 4 seconds, splices which completely eliminate its claim to being a copy of the original, and the claim that the parent copy is the original film.
6. Finally, the alteration strongly suggests that the film was altered to conceal information from the public before the film could become the legal property of a major corporation like Time-Life, with the attendant worldwide publication.
7. The whole episode suggests that there were other interested parties, On November 22-23, 1963, ~~xx~~ to what was supposedly a transaction between a major photo magazine and an amateur photographer, a private individual who happened to film the motorcade in which the President was murdered and that the identity of these interested parties has remained unknown. The amateur photographer received a large sum of money for what was supposed to be the original film. The corporation involved did not receive the original film, but rather a cut and altered version, and has said nothing about the matter.
8. ~~Whaxxxx~~ Who are the interested parties?? How was this accomplished?