

3 September 1968

Mr. Paul H. Chapman  
2045 Peachtree Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Dear Mr. Chapman,

Thank you very much for your letter of 30 August 1968, addressed jointly to Tink Thompson and me. I do appreciate your courtesy in providing this full account of your viewing of the Zapruder film. Incidentally, I asked for several copies of TMO to be sent to you, and I hope they were received. If not, please let me know, and I will make sure they are mailed.

I have no reason to question your confidence in Miss Scobey's honesty and sincerity. The fact that she made a special trip in order to examine the film certainly supports your belief. Let me say that at the outset of my work on the case, I proceeded on the assumption that the Commission members and staff (or most of them) acted in good faith. I wrote to a number of them, perhaps a dozen letters, raising in each case some of the more serious conflicts and discrepancies, or misstatements and omissions, in the Report, in comparison with the testimony and exhibits. I hoped that I would receive replies explaining or vindicating the statements in the Report, or at least admitting that the evidence or allegation in question was defective. (Miss Scobey was not among those to whom I wrote.)

I did not receive any reply at all from most of those I addressed; one said he would write later that same month (July 1965) but then failed to do so, even when I sent two reminders. One telephoned, on a confidential basis, but was unable to explain or to justify the points at issue. Meanwhile, serious major works challenging the Warren Report have been published, written by responsible scholars who documented their criticisms very painstakingly, including the books by Epstein, Sauvage, Thompson, and my own book. The individual and aggregate charges in these books have not been refuted—they have not even been acknowledged, for the most part, and some spokesmen for the Commission have pretended that it was beneath their dignity to take notice of the criticism which, by its inherent force and invulnerability, have greatly discredited the Report. I have to say, therefore, that even those Commission members and staff who acted in complete good faith now have a moral responsibility—not only to reexamine their position, but to confront each specific point legitimately raised by the critics.

The matter does not hinge on the interpretation of the Zapruder film, or on the single-bullet theory, or on any other single element of evidence. The entire fabric of the Report is decomposed and deformed, as has been fully documented in my book and other works. Because I do believe that many of those who were involved in the Report are persons of conscience,

and integrity, I have hoped that they would come forward and take the initiative in pressing for a reexamination of the whole case. I have not yet given up hope, and it is a bit of encouragement that Miss Scobey has been sufficiently concerned to view the film.

I do not think I can contribute anything to a further study of the Connally shot. I reject completely the theory of delayed reaction, for the reasons stated in Accessories After the Fact, pages 29-31, and those stated in Six Seconds in Dallas as to the involuntary out-rushing of air seen in the unmistakable puffing of the cheeks in the specific frame or frames designated.

As to the head shot: you refer to a "short forward motion, then leftward thrust" of the President's head. It was thrust violently and backward, as well as to the left. It is not clear from your letter how you and Miss Scobey reacted to that, visually, and in the light of Dr. Thompson's quantification of the rate of backward movement.

Certainly I join you in your hope that we may yet find the truth. At the very least, we must destroy the untruths which still stand on the official record of this most tragic and fateful event, and the grave miscarriage of justice inherent in the "lone assassin" finding. Whether or not those associated with the Report reconsider its findings, the critics have a sacred obligation to press onward, committed to truth and justice for their own sake.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. Thompson, and I leave it to your judgment if you wish to send copies to the other parties.

With all good wishes,

Sylvia Meagher  
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