

19 November 1970

Mr Doug Outcalt  
6720 E Culver  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85257

Dear Mr Outcalt,

You must have misunderstood Fred Newcomb, as to his having shown me material on his "surgical alteration" theory. Actually I have never met Fred, and knew him only through correspondence and a very few phone conversations. He has written and/or told me about his theory but it left me, at best, with the proverbial open mind. I suppose it is not impossible that there was accidental or deliberate alteration before autopsy, and it does need investigation; but there is so much clearly wrong about the autopsy and the subsequent reviews of the photos and X-rays that it is difficult to regard any of the findings as hard evidence.

I am encouraged to hear that your showings of the Zapruder film and Fred's slides on the photos of Oswald-with-rifle have had real impact. Incidentally, I do regard Fred's work on these photos as a genuine and major contribution.

But his shots-from-inside-the-car theory, as well as his hypothesis of Kellerman and Greer substitutes, seem to me really extremely far-fetched, implausible, and unreasonable. Between us, I just do not regard it as serious or meriting much discussion, unless and until some conclusive proof can be adduced--and I would bet that it will not be.

Earlier this year in my correspondence with Lifton I made clear my deep scepticism about the thesis of prior tampering with the Zapruder film (before it was delivered to LIFE New York). Lifton had fairly good counterarguments on the issue of pure feasibility, but my intuition continues to reject this and similarly elaborate and complicated theories (one lady from Kansas is convinced that the shooting was done by the motorcycle officers behind the presidential car--fortuitously, just when they happened to be beyond the range of Zapruder's camera for a split second).

Thank you for suggesting Phoenix for a future visit. I often feel the need for a vacation, but they fall due only infrequently. I have a full-time job that is rather demanding, most of the year, and it was only last August that I finally got to visit Dallas, for the first time. But I appreciate your hospitable suggestion. With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher  
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