

July 14, 1966

The Nation
333 Sixth Avenue
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sirs:

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While Mr. Jacob Cohen wrestles with the angel of truth about evidentiary problems of the assassination of President Kennedy, ponders the significance of the secreted autopsy photographs and x-rays, awaits deliverance from doubt and dilemma, and writes his book in defense of the Warren Commission's principal finding that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone killer, he might find it enlightening to visit the National Archives in Washington again, there to see the government's copy of the famous Zapruder silent motion picture color film of the assassination. If he has already done so, a second viewing should give him a point of factual reference from which to evaluate the autopsy report.

The film takes less than half a minute to run and will be run by the Archives projectionist as many times as Mr. Cohen may request. It can be projected as taken originally and then run in reverse. It can be stopped for inspection at any point, but inevitably loses clarity and definition. Remarkably, this short film is the only piece of incontrovertible hard evidence in the entire case, and its close study ought to be a sine qua non for all researchers and writers on the assassination and the Warren Commission. But it has been much neglected.

The film does not establish when the President was first hit, and this point remains a matter of inference, deduction, calculation, and speculation. Nor does the film establish the precise moment when Texas Governor Connally was struck, and this point likewise is indeterminate. There is no mistaking, however, the moment of impact of the fatal Kennedy head hit. A spray of blood and tissue rises fan-shaped from the area of the right temple. Instantly, the President is flung back violently against the seat of the limousine, bounces forward, and spins off to his left, away from the camera, into the encircling arms of his horrified, revolted, and stricken widow. From the testimony of the Connallys, man and wife, and Secret Service agents Greer, Kellerman, and Hill, Mr. Cohen can extract the unanimous opinion the Presidential limousine leaped forward to begin its desperate flight to Parkland Hospital, after the President was struck fatally, precluding the possibility sudden acceleration of the car caused the gyration of Kennedy's body.

As defender of the Commission's principal conclusion that Oswald alone killed the President, Mr. Cohen is necessarily committed to the autopsy finding "the deceased died as a result of two perforating gunshot wounds inflicted by high velocity projectiles. . . fired from a point behind and somewhat above the level of the deceased." But as a teacher of history, Mr. Cohen may be excused if he ignores the obvious evidence of the film that Kennedy was

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struck fatally from a point somewhat to his right, if not also somewhat from in front, and accepts the revolutionary physics implied by the autopsy whereby a bullet striking Kennedy from behind impelled him against the direction of the bullet's thrust.

Mr. Cohen may take comfort from the thought he shares this dilemma with illustrious peers. The Commission, the Report notes, viewed the film and undoubtedly read the autopsy reports. It would be a studied insult to the perspicacious and prestigious members of that now defunct body which, like Oswald, the victim of its stigma, cannot defend itself, to suggest they failed to note the discrepancy between film and autopsy. And it would be equally unthinkable to suppose that astute counsel also failed to note the conflict in evidence and call it to the Commission's attention.

Mr. Cohen has read the Commission's Report and labored among its volumes of testimony and exhibits. Perhaps, as attorney for the accused, he can explain on what grounds the Commission accepted the autopsy findings and ignored the unmistakable evidence of the film. It would be a service of inestimable value and historic significance if, unlike the Commission, he can silence the abounding and multiplying skeptics who asperse the Commission with the charge it accepted the autopsy findings uncritically because they supported its predetermined conclusion of a lone assassin. Perhaps, too, Mr. Cohen may be able to put a quietus to the suspicion the Commission disregarded the evidence of the film because it proved the activity of at least one gunman in addition to the marksman in the Texas School Book Depository, and established thereby the assassination was achieved by enfilade and was the work of a conspiracy.

On the other hand, Mr. Cohen, who theorized at some length about possible "benign" reasons for secretion of the autopsy photographs and x-rays, may wish to change his stance in consequence of confronting the evidence of the film, and project some ideas about the nature of the conspiracy indicated by the evidence ignored by the Commission.

Very truly yours,

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