

JFK film may reveal two gunmen

Movie stills enhanced to show 6th-floor site

By EARL GOLZ
©The Dallas Morning News, 1978

A film of the John F. Kennedy assassination site, brought to light only last week, may show two persons, not one, in the 6th-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository building minutes before the fatal shots were fired.

Robert J. Groden, a film technician who has worked for the House Assassinations Committee, "enhanced" a short strip of movie film taken by an amateur photographer that fatal noontime on Nov. 22, 1963.

"You can actually see one figure walking back and forth hurriedly," Groden said. "I think what was happening there is the sniper's nest was actually being completed just prior to the shots being fired."

If his interpretation is correct, it would disprove the Warren Commission conclusion that Kennedy was shot by a single assassin — Lee Harvey Oswald — working alone.

Groden, of Hope Lawn, N.J., is a staff consultant on photographic evidence for the House Assassinations Committee. It was his enhancement of the Abraham Zapruder color film of the fatal shot being fired into Kennedy's head that led to the reopening of the assassination investigation.

The latest film, the third known motion picture of the scene, was taken by amateur photographer Charles L. Bronson, chief metallurgist for an Ada, Okla., oil tool company. It was shot from about a block away from the school book depository building and includes a scene where an ambulance made a sick call at the depository building about 12:24 p.m., six minutes before Kennedy was killed.

That scene, shot with a wide-angle lens, shows the school book depository and the 6th-floor window from where, the Warren Commission concluded, the fatal shots were fired.

Bronson's film was viewed in 1963 by an FBI agent who reported that it "failed to show the building from which the shots were fired." Agent Milton L. Newsom reported that the film "did depict the president's car at the precise time shots were fired; however, the pictures were not sufficiently clear for identification purposes."

Because of this, the film was never used in any investigation of the assassination. Its existence was discovered when it was listed among 90,000 pages of FBI assassination documents declassified last December and January.

The Dallas Morning News recently located Bronson and the original color movie film and commissioned Groden to analyze that portion of it showing the 6th-floor double window of the school book depository.

Groden is continuing to analyze the film, but issued a preliminary opinion that "simultaneous movement" can be seen in the window. At the time the film was taken, there supposedly was no one on the sixth floor of the school book depository building. Not even Oswald admitted to authorities he was then on the sixth floor, and one witness said she saw him in the 2nd-floor lunchroom only minutes earlier.

Before Oswald was shot to death Nov. 24, 1963, by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby in the basement of Dallas police headquarters, he repeatedly denied he shot the president and

insisted someone had made him a "patsy" in the assassination.

School book depository employee Bonnie Ray Williams acknowledged he was the last person known to have been on the sixth floor before the assassination. He told the Warren Commission he could see no one when he left the sixth floor at about 12:20 p.m. after eating his lunch there. This was about four minutes before Bronson's film was taken.

Two witnesses standing along Houston Street less than one block from the school book depository building told the Warren Commission they saw two men with a gun in different but nearby windows of the building at about the time Bronson was filming. The Warren Commission, however, discounted their stories.

"There is no question that there is movement (in Bronson's window film)," Groden said. "And I'm sure, given time and money, a computer could probably clarify the images a bit more."

One of the persons in the window is wearing a magenta, or purplish red, shirt, Groden said, and "you can actually see one figure walking back and forth hurriedly."

"I think what was happening there is the sniper's nest was actually being completed just prior to the shots being fired."

FBI agent Newsom viewed the movie with Bronson as soon as it was

See COMPUTER, Page 13A.

Computer work may clarify

Continued from Page 1A.

processed at the Eastman Kodak Co. in Dallas in 1963.

"He told me the film was of no value because it didn't show the book depository building," Bronson said. "I didn't realize myself that the building was on there until a couple of weeks ago."

Told last week that the film showed the building and two moving images framed in the alleged assassin's window, Newsom asked whether Bronson was "certain that's the film that we looked at" in 1963.

"Whether or not we actually saw what you are talking about, of course, I have no way of knowing that," Newsom said. "Whatever was reported there in the memo was what we saw."

Bronson's movie camera captured the fatal shot to Kennedy's head as the open-top limousine approached the triple underpass on Elm Street. Jacques-

line Kennedy, clad in her pink suit, can be seen rising in the rear seat after realizing her husband had been shot.

The Bronson film of the head shot, taken at a greater distance and showing less detail, is not as dramatic as the Zapruder film.

Only seconds earlier Bronson used a 35mm Leica camera to snap a color photo of the first shot that struck Kennedy in the back.

Bronson, who at the time was chief engineer for Varel Manufacturing Co. of Dallas, took all his film of the assassination while perched atop a pedestal at the southwest corner of Main and Houston streets, aiming across Dealey Plaza toward Elm Street.

He said he took that part of the film that shows the school book depository building when an ambulance arrived near Houston and Elm streets in response to a call to aid a man who had

an epileptic seizure.

The revolving red dome light on the ambulance is visible in Bronson's film while the vehicle was parked on Houston, a few feet south of Elm. The police radio log shows the ambulance arrived about 12:23 p.m. and left for Parkland Memorial Hospital at 12:24 p.m.

When he was jolted six minutes later by the sound of the first gun shot, Bronson said, he accidentally triggered the shutter of his Leica. He got a somewhat blurred image of the limousine at about the time the first bullet struck Kennedy in the back, shortly after the vehicle turned onto Elm from Houston Street.

The resulting photo represents the first full view of the presidential limousine during the first hit, 15 years after the fact.

Zapruder, who filmed from the pergola atop the grassy knoll in Dealey

*** Sunday, November 26, 1978 The Dallas Morning News 13 A

images in Bronson film

Plaza, missed the first shot when the limousine moved behind a road sign on the north side of Elm Street. Bronson, filming from the opposite side of Elm without a sign to block his view, photographed Zapruder and his secretary on the pergola during the first hit.

The photo also shows L. Steven Witt, the so-called "umbrella man" who has said he was conducting a 1-man political protest aimed at Kennedy when the president was killed several feet away. Witt can be seen in Bronson's photo of the first shot with his umbrella fully open and above his head while standing on the north side of Elm in Dealey Plaza.

Witt recently testified before the House Assassinations Committee that he didn't see the first shot strike Kennedy because "as I was moving forward I apparently had this umbrella in front of me for some few steps."

The committee's panel of photography experts has discounted the presence of human figures in the only other known movie film of the 6th-floor window of the school book depository.

Robert Hughes, who was standing only several feet to the east of Bronson, took an 88-frame sequence of 8-mm color film showing both the presidential limousine and the school book depository. His film shows the limousine approaching the corner of Elm and Houston streets and ends about five seconds later as the vehicle completed the turn in front of the depository, about six seconds before the first shot was fired.

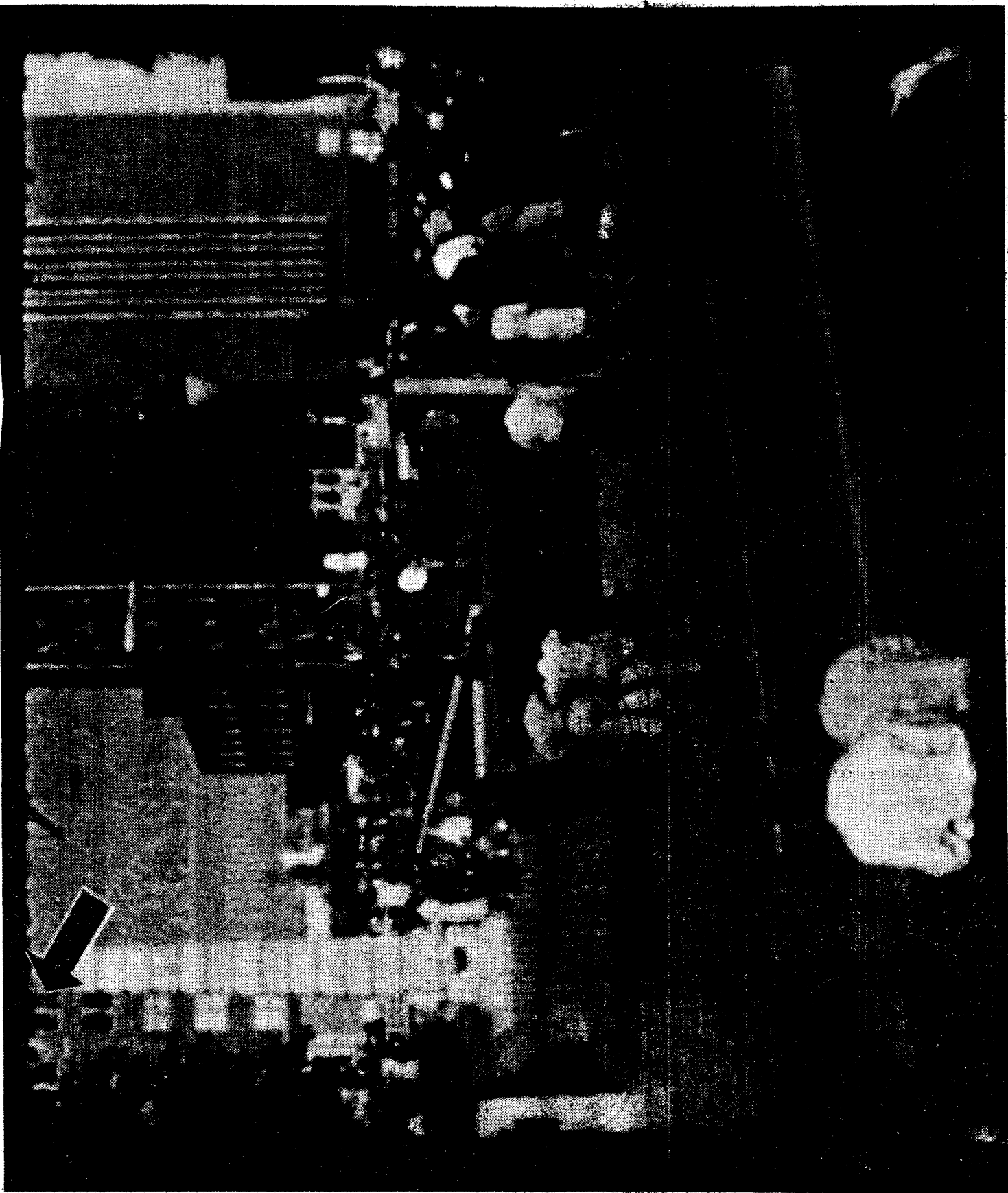
The Hughes film was analyzed by the Itek Corp. of Lexington, Mass., for a special CBS-TV report on the Kennedy assassination in 1975. Itek's preliminary report stated it detected "definite

movement of an object in the 6th-floor corner window" but could not identify it.

Using techniques varying from visual observations to computer processing of the imagery, Itek's final report to CBS concluded no moving objects were visible in the double window.

Groden, however, studied the Hughes film and disagrees with Itek. He also notes that the Bronson film, while underexposed, is "of considerably better quality" than the Hughes film, which is overexposed. He estimated that a "3-stop range" separates the exposures between the two films.

"Being underexposed presents us with a great many problems," Groden said. "But being underexposed also gives us the color saturation that we need and stops the flaring off the white borders of the windows. So we gain a lot that way, too."



Arrow indicates the 6th-floor window in this frame from a film taken by Charles L. Bronson only minutes before President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963. Figures appear to be

standing in the open windows of the Texas School Book Depository. The film has been enhanced and enlargements of the window area appear on Page 12A.

©Charles L. Bronson, 1978 All Rights Reserved