

August 5, 1967

Dear Harold,

Under a cover letter dated August 2, 1967, Ray Marcus sent me a portion of a letter to you dated August 2, 1967. (The portion sent was the entire first page, and the first paragraph of the second page). Today, I received a copy of his letter to you dated August 3, 1967.

I wanted to take this opportunity to confirm the fact that the Zapruder frame 314-315 frame transposition was first demonstrated and explained to me by Ray Marcus, when I first made his acquaintance in the Spring of 1965. I am certainly not the discoverer of this phenomenon, nor have I ever claimed to be such to anyone.

As stated in his letter of August 3, Ray included this fact in the form of a footnote on photographic panels he had made up at that time showing JFK's head being propelled backwards by the force of the fatal shot. From the very first time he showed this to me in the Spring of 1965, it always has been my impression that this was his discovery. At that time, he showed me how it could be proved: by noting that the little girl in the background of these frames would be running the wrong way (for these two particular frames) if they were not read "315-314" rather than as published, "314-315". He proved this by dropping a perpendicular from the girl's foot to the side of the Kennedy auto in frames 314 and frames 315, and showing that the girl's motion would be backwards along the car instead of forward s along the car, unless the frames were viewed in the sequence: "313 315 314".

How did the Hoover letter come to be written?

The following fall, I met Stanley Sheinbaum, who was connected with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Santa Barbara, and a Senior editor of Ramparts Magazine. The magazine was interested in digging into the assassination, and he was interested in an article. I told him that I would prepare a long one detailing, as comprehensively as possible, all the arguments for the existence of more than one assassin. I originally wrote this in the form of a Socratic dialogue and called it: "Assassination, 1963; The Citizen and the Critic: A Dialogue in Defense of Conspiracy". The following summer (June 1966), I was temporarily employed at Ramparts magazine for about six weeks, and it was this "dialogue" manuscript which, completely rewritten and in essay (rather than dialogue) format, became "The Case For Three Assassins" (published in Jan. 1967) which I co-authored with Dave Welsh.

In response to Sheinbaum's original request, I started to prepare an outline of and material for the dialogue in December of 1965. I led off with the argument for a shooter on the grassy knoll. The central feature of this argument was the head snap (which, by the way, was first demonstrated to me by Ray---when he went over all his hypotheses with me) . ~~XXXXX~~

Three crucial subproblems immediately presented themselves when I started to try to put this head snap argument into words suitable for a published article.

Problem one was getting a good physicist who would permit himself to be quoted on the subject. That was solved, when, through my contacts at school, I met Jim Riddle who agreed with the argument, was interested in the controversy, and was willing to be quoted.

Problem two was the location of and the interviewing of neurosurgeons, as to whether or not this phenomenon was merely a neuromuscular reaction.

I spent much time doing that, and I do have a quotable neurosurgeon, as well as book references to the phenomenon called "decerebrate rigidity", the only possibly couterexplanation which---it so happens---could not possibly apply to this instance.

The third problem concerned the 314-315 frame reversal. As I stated previously, Ray had discovered this and was able to prove this by a geometric construction involving the dropping of perpendicular lines from the little girl's foot in the background of the Zapruder film in frames 314 and 315. His proof was essentially geometric, and involved the introduction of arguments completely unrelated to the main point of the argument: which way the President's head moved, and whether there was a shooter on the grassy knoll. Nevertheless, it was not possible to simply assert that the frames were misnumbered without going into the matter, because then one would leave oneself open to the charge of not having informed the reader of all the facts.

This was the problem faced back in December of 1965, and at that time, if you remember, it was hell just getting people to accept that ANYTHING could be wrong with the Warren Report. The 25 volumes were a strange, authoritative looking thing.

How many times did I explain the head snap argument to a person, only to have it spoiled when he asked: "Whats this footnote on those frame numbers?" I would explain that, as labeled, the frames were in the incorrect order. Such a person, seeing an "out", would not bother with the technical details proving frame reversal, but would simply retort:

"You mean that the way they are printed, the head doesn't go back. So you are right about the head shot coming from the front only if your "theory" (!! ) that the frames are in the wrong order is also correct?"

I don't suppose it will suprise you that this mentality exists. Because of this, I thought of the idea of getting some authoritative person connected with the investigation to admit in writing that the error existed.

I designed a deliberately disingenuous letter to Shaneyfelt. My girl friend agreed to sign it, and to permit her address to be used, just as if it were her own letter. (A spate of articles in Europe by Buchanan, published at that time, was based on the Moorman images which I sent him, and some of them included my name. For that reason, I didn't use my own name to the FBI).

I attach a copy of the letter to Shaneyfelt for your records. I was careless and misspelled "labeled" and "Lyndal", each with an extra "l". I suppose these errors added to the innocent look. I don't know.

Regarding the letter to Shaneyfelt: Obviously, I dared not refer to the head motion of JFK in the letter, either to prove frame reversal, or to point out the implications of frame reversal, if I expected a reply. The letter to Shaneyfelt carefully, and an innocent-sounding as possible, employed Ray's proof with the perpendiculars.

About 6 days later, my girl friend received the reply from Hoover. Within a few weeks, I ran off about 8 copies and mailed them to anyone I thought might make use of it, and to the various critics with whom I was corresponding. As I didn't make your acquaintance until the following summer by phone at Ramparts, I didn't send you one at that time.

Armed with the Hoover letter, I was then legitimately able to discuss the head motion without any confusing excursions into geometric explanations regarding frame transposition. In Ramparts, this was done using footnote 9-B on page 89.

Of those people who follow the details of the controversy between critics and defenders of the Report, I am sure that most of those who are aware of the frames being transposed know that this is true because Hoover admitted it in a letter.

I don't think most are aware---first of all---that the reason this is true is because a little girl running in the background would move in the incorrect direction along the line of the car between 314 and 315 if these frames were viewed as published, and---secondly--- that this fact was originally discovered by Ray Marcus, thus proving frame reversal.

Because of the existence of the letter from Hoover, much of the discussion concerning the frame transposition has usually limited to its mere existence as confirmed by that letter, a letter properly associated with my name, and not to the geometric fact of life which Ray first noted and which underlied this discovery.

This has, unfortunately, also caused Ray not to receive the recognition he rightly deserves as the discoverer.

Had Ray Marcus permitted me to use his name and address on the letter I wrote to the FBI (instead of that of my girlfriend), then I suppose I would be in the position of having to point out to people that it was "my idea" to write such a letter, in the first place. As it stands now, he frequently finds himself in the position of having to point out to people that it was "his discovery", in the first place.

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Now, Harold, some comments about your book.

First of all, I like it and it is loaded with useful data.

Second of all, I feel that a book of this sort would receive much wider distribution if it had incorporated more of the photographs themselves. I know that this would cost more, but if the market were widened by doing so, might not then the cost have been borne by a professional publisher?

Third; your presentation of bad copies of documents to show how bad they are raises the possibility of a new type of op art, rivalling modern art's "White on White".

All I can say, Harold, is that you have written an extremely specialized book. I think the market could be greatly enlarged if the details of the photographic coverup could be combined with the photos themselves.

One last remark. In view of the strategy behind and the reasons for, the use of my girlfriend's name and address on the letter to Shaneyfelt, I winced to see it described on page 155 as follows: "David Lifton wrote Shaneyfelt in the name of a woman." Gads Harold; what a choice of phraseology! It sounds like I deliberately chose some female pseudonym as an expression of transvestism!

Keep up the good work. You will be hearing from me when I do come east.

Sincerely yours,

*David*  
David Lifton

Attached: Copy of letter to Shaneyfelt of 12/16/65

P.S. I am sending Ray Marcus a copy of this letter.