

PHOTOGRAPHS

Refer to my discussion of the signs that are such a key item in the identification in the ~~Zapruder~~ Zapruder films. According to the analysis I made/earlier, (Reel 1 of the notes) there had to be a second sign not visible in the Commission's aerial photograph, nor in those published in the news media about the time of the issuance of the Commission's report.

I have not yet found the Hudson photograph referred to in the interrogation (20 H 183) (citation found before typing) of Zapruder. I have, however, found another exhibit, No. 2114. It appears on p.35 of the report and on p.544 of Vol. 24.

This exhibit consists of 4 photographs described in the Table of Contents to Vol. 24 simply as "Photographic views of highway markings in the vicinity of the assassination."

The 4, together with the art work, take up less than a half page, so they are rather small.

The first one on the right, identified with the arrow "B" shows not 2, but at least 3 such signs. Closest to the foreground, at the beginning of a concrete wall that goes around part of the decorative arrangements to the west of the Book Depository Building in Dealey Plaza and approximately abreast of what looks like the beginning of a walk generally following the wall, there is a large sign wider than the man in the picture is tall, reading, "R. D. THORNTON FREEWAY KEEP RIGHT". Immediately behind it is a small scrubby looking tree. A little bit closer in the foreground is one of the metal lampposts.

Behind this sign is another sign reading, "STEMMONS FREEWAY, KEEP RIGHT". There is a little plot between these two signs, but there is no walk between them; coming from the street, the line between the sidewalk and what appears to be the grassy area on the right looking at the picture is unbroken to past the Stemmons sign. Including the pole in the foreground, there are three such light poles clearly visible on this side of Elm Street, the side on which the Book Depository is located.

Note that the legend on these two signs coincides exactly with testimony about them in the case of the Thornton sign by a Secret Service agent previously quoted and, in the case of the Stemmons sign, during the questioning of Zapruder by the Commission's Counsel doing the questioning.

Even with the aid of a magnifying glass, I am uncertain about the legend on the third sign. I believe, however, that it says, "FORT WORTH TURNPIKE KEEP RIGHT".

Referring to the clear aerial photograph in the October 2, 1964, issue of LIFE, the third light pole toward the east or away from the Triple Underpass, also somewhat to the east of the stairs which lead to the concrete decorations, described in the Zapruder testimony as "abutment" is considerably to the east of the only sign visible in this aerial photograph.

So the Zapruder films with the proper location of the sign which is missing in the Commission's aerial photograph, as well as in that of the news media, really shows that the President was shot and killed to the east of where he would, from the Commission's report, seem to have been shot. This third pole from the Triple Underpass now becomes a crucially important landmark. The President, according to the Zapruder film, received his first injury before this lamppost appears in the films. There follows a sequence of films showing the lamppost and following that appears the film in which the President's head was shot.

I believe also this considerably shortens the time interval that can be estimated or allowed between the shots. There would seem to be at most 4 to 5 car lengths.

According to the aerial photograph in the news media, the tree which appears in the foreground of Exhibit 2114 and there appears like a very skimpy tree, is quite bushy, more than could be accounted for by the difference in the seasons of the year.

Do

we have here a case of a destruction or alteration in evidence?

I believe earlier I noted, with respect to the Zapruder films, that, in the area of Dealey Plaza, along Houston Street that they show a comparison of the Zapruder films with pictures taken subsequent to the assassination shows that what appears to be a hedge was pruned. This, of course, destroys identification of background material in the individual frames of the Zapruder film.

However, with respect to these signs, the consequences are impossible to exaggerate. Any effort to reconstruct the crime from the Zapruder films depends upon Zapruder's precise location, which the Commission has never at any point given, and the identification of landmarks within the film. One of these is the sign over and around the back of which he photographed. It would seem that with the FBI and Secret Service and the Warren Commission all concerned about the details of the President's assassination, whether or not the Dallas police were, some provision should have been made to preserve all landmarks which are always important in any kind of photograph analysis and identification. The failure of anyone to do so constitutes, it would seem, at best, an inexcusable negligence, and at worst something I would hesitate to describe.