

HAROLD WEISBERG

7627 Old Receiver Rd.
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12/10/93

Mr. Tom Alyea
P.O. Box 4266
Tulsa, OK 74159

Dear Mr. Alyea,

As Gary Mack told you, I am looking for the first picture taken or as close to that as I can get of the rifle as found. As you remembered, I had printed one from a commission volume in my first book. I did not turn or distort it. I printed it the way the Commission did. While that is not a clear picture, if it is examined closely it is clear that the picture does not reflect that the rifle was standing on its butt, which Gary indicated you thought I was trying to show. Nothing like that! I just want to show it as it was left. I had heard that you photographed it before Studebaker and thus I believed that your photographs, frames, would be more likely to depict it before it was touched. And certainly be clearer!

Gary said that one of the detectives used your camera for you. I remember that Constable Weitzman and was it Deputy Mooney posted guard so it would not be touched. So, I think it is likely that what you have on film was before Studebaker shot any. That is my interest, plus the fact that the pictures in the Archives are terrible. I want to use it to illustrate the testimony by the two above, nothing else.

Gary told me the muzzle end is not included. My interest is not in showing the entire rifle, although that would be better. I just want to show how it ~~was~~ was when it was found, before it or anything around it was touched or moved.

Its relationship to the boxes, things like that, too.

You may not be aware of it but there is no theorizing in any of my books. To the degree possible I avoid any contact with those who think that whether or not there was a conspiracy is a matter of theory.

If you'll be kind enough to let me have a print I'll appreciate it. Tell me the cost and I'll send you a check. And if you do, please indicate how to credit it. If I understood Gary correctly and you were not allowed to do it yourself, that can, I think, indicate police responsibility in being that careful and if you'll give me a brief account of that I may want to include it. Credit where credit is due, too.

If you are kind enough to do this, please make it two prints.

Thanks, sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

TV cameraman. Returning from covering the President's visit to Fort Worth, he had just reached Dealey Plaza when the President was shot. Alyea, too, had pictures of the face and front of the TSBD building at the moment of the assassination, of people going in and coming out and standing around, perhaps hurrying away.

"He immediately ran inside," the FBI report says.

Once inside, he filmed the search for the assassin, and when the rifle was located on the sixth floor, he photographed it in its original position.

Alyea's pictures of the rifle "in its original position" can be enough to destroy the entire Report. In photographing the rifle in place, Police Photographer Robert Lee Studebaker got a better picture of his own knee. The Commission uses pictures that are of even poorer quality than those available from the police. By going to the police copies, I was able to find a picture that does show how carefully the rifle was hidden.

Alyea must have preserved on film all the people on the sixth floor from the moment he got there, those who were there, those who left and those who came. He got there, from the FBI report, almost immediately. His pictures are undoubtedly the best and apparently the only record of the condition of that floor at the time of the assassination, of where things were and were not, and of who was there and who came there.

Without doubt, Alyea's was the most valuable of film. He appears to have been the only photographer there. (We cannot know officially because the Commission did not want us to.) He is not mentioned in the Report and was not interviewed until after his film "had been used extensively in television broadcasts both from Dallas and from CBS, New York." Again, this is 100 percent consistent with the record of the FBI and the Commission.

By the time he was interviewed, according to the FBI report, "the film [had] now been cut and spliced with other film." It was no longer in its original form. This is natural, inevitable, the normal consequence of the use of the film, and not secret to the government which, by doing nothing, guaranteed it would happen.

Alyea promised that his station would "dub a copy of all of the five hundred feet which they could locate and identify and furnish it to the FBI." On April 10, four and a half months after the assassination, R. Neil Quigley, one of these two interviewing agents, was given a roll of film by Bob Turner, of the WFAA

CHAPTER 14: MORE LOST PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

The FBI located Cameraman Steven L. Alexander, who had covered the tragic events in Dallas from the evening of the assassination day through the murder of Oswald. That report (Exhibit 2037) shows not a single question asked him by FBI Agent James A. Wooten about any pictures he took, and yet it is utterly devastating of the police, showing that they allowed free ingress and egress at the time Oswald was to be moved and that they never once asked Alexander for the credentials he did not have. He could have testified that there was no question about the specific announcement of the time Oswald would be moved, an open invitation to an attempt upon his life. He could have testified that immediately after Ruby killed Oswald, "there was a rumor going around in the basement of the City Hall in Dallas on the afternoon of November 24, 1963, that... Oswald had been in Ruby's night club a day or two before November 22, 1963." He could and did identify a number of other witnesses. He was not called as a witness. Not one of those he named was called, even though pictures taken by some were used in "evidence."

If we have no way of knowing whether or not Alexander took film of value, this is not the case with Thomas P. Alyea, WFAA-