

people in right-wing, so-called patriotic organizations including the John Birch Society. NBC never aired that show. Subsequent evidence supports much of what Dean and Morris said.

But even if someone attempts to tell Tom Snyder about that evidence, he claims it will not change his mind and he will urge the person with the information to stop trying to change it. Despite such a view, Tom Snyder believes that someone—someone other than himself apparently—would gladly pay money for such evidence of conspiracy. The fact that he will not believe it enough to pay for it, and the fact that those who have revealed the evidence have been accused of doing so solely because they are monetarily motivated, does not enter into his thinking. It can't because he won't let it.

Because he is a true believer, Tom Snyder almost sheds tears of joy when he hears his friend and presidential candidate, Senator Arlen Specter, declare that President Kennedy's coat and shirt rose from the middle of his back to his neck just in time to receive a bullet hole there, then in the blink of an eye fell back into place because of a back brace that isn't understood by others to cause this because it never visibly interfered with the President's clothing.

This is the "stuff" that Tom Snyder "could go on for an hour about" because, as he said, "I truly believe that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and that the Single Bullet Theory holds water." Goodbye honest, straight forward, level-headed, Midwest, principled guy. Hello true believer.

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## THE MAGIC SKULL

by

Milicent Cranor

### SEVEN FRAMES EARLY, A STRANGE SHAPE

It is flat and triangular. It has the thickness of bone. It has a white edge and small notches. Lines radiate outward, fan-like, from where it attaches to the right temporal region of Kennedy's head. Its size, shape, and location appear to be identical to the temporal-parietal bone flap seen in autopsy

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photos and x-rays. The object appears on the Nix film at frame 17 — seven frames before Kennedy is supposed to be hit in the head for the first and only time at Nix frame 24. It is not easy to see.

The photographer, Orville Nix, had filmed from Kennedy's left. The object was visible on the left because Kennedy leaned in that direction. As the film progresses, its orientation changes. Like a sail in a storm, it shows its full width one moment (N-17), and its profile the next (N-22).

The shape is accompanied by a long white line that, considered in three dimensions, lies in the same angle as the one that leaves the head in Zapruder 313 at 70 degrees. The shape is accompanied by abrupt changes in head position not evident on the Zapruder film.

At almost the same place on the Muchmore film (M-36), six frames before the official head shot (M-42), white lines come from (or approach) the head, also at the same angle with the horizon as the lines in Zapruder 313. The top of Kennedy's head seems abnormally white compared with the heads of other people, and a small area directly to the right of his head is also white. Hovering above are reddish brown shapes — scalp-covered bone fragments or chemical damage on the film? The shapes move upward and backward in subsequent frames. There is a slight blurring soon after, but before the main head shot.

The Zapruder equivalents (Z-306-Z-312) show Kennedy frozen in place with nothing wrong with his head until Z-313. On clear copies of this film, you can see the flap swing out on a vertical hinge, slanting to the right 70 degrees. Its orientation changes, and the hinge becomes horizontal. The flap seems to support the upper half of a large clam on the side of the head. In Z-313, about an inch and a half above the ear, is an arc, apparently the perimeter of a crater left by the bone flap which is the same size and shape. If the flap swung backward, it would fit into this crater.

### DID MRS. KENNEDY SEE IT?

Jacqueline Kennedy's testimony suggests she saw the bone flap before the head exploded. According to the Z film, the air is instantly filled with debris when Kennedy is shot in the head. Yet, Mrs. Kennedy saw bone before the explosion:

*"I could see a piece of his skull and I remember it was flesh colored. I remember thinking he just looked as if he had a slight headache...No blood or anything. And then he sort of did this (indicating), put his hand to his forehead and fell in my lap. "[1]*

**WHAT WITNESSES SAW**

Witnesses who were behind and to the left of Kennedy may have seen the "piece of his skull" and thought it was only hair. Jean Hill said Kennedy's hair "rippled up" after which she heard more shots. [2] Special Agent George Hickey, Jr. testified that he heard a shot, then two more:

*"The first shot of the second two seemed as if it missed because the hair on the right side of his head flew forward and there didn't seem to be any impact against the head..." [3]*

Special Agent Samuel Kinney had a similar impression: *"...I observed hair flying from the right side of his head."* [4]

FBI report on Charles Brehm, who was on the left side of Kennedy when he was shot:

*"...another shot sounded and the President appeared to be badly hit in the head. BREHM said when the President was hit by the second shot he could notice the President's hair fly up, and then ...BREHM said that a third shot followed..." [5]*

**ENTRY IN FRONT OF THE EAR**

Special Agent Roy Kellerman may have seen the entry of the bullet that created the flap.

*"Entry into this man's head was right below that wound, right here." [6]*

Arlen Specter put Kellerman's gesture into words:

*"Indicating the bottom of the hairline immediately to the right of the ear about the lower third of the ear." [6]*

To the right of the ear? The official entrance wound was in the rear of the head, and the official position of the marksman was behind the limousine. At the moment of the head shot on the Z film, Kennedy was turned to his left, bringing his right ear more toward the front. Kellerman expressed his confusion:

*"...I believe aside from the skull, that was in the rear seat, I couldn't conceive even from elevation how this shot hit President Kennedy like it did...whether this was a slant blow off the car, whether it hit the car first and then hit him..." [7]*

**A STRANGE QUESTION**

In 1975, Robert Olsen of the President's Commission on C.I.A. Activities asked a very strange question of Dr. John Lattimer, a urologist who had examined the autopsy photos and x-rays:

*"Doctor, did you find any evidence whatever that would support postulating a tangential shot from the*

*front or right front which would not have penetrated the President's head, but merely would have glanced off the right side of his skull?" [8]*

Lattimer, who had never seen the body, and is neither a radiologist nor forensic pathologist, replied that he had not seen any evidence for such a shot. Olson persisted:

*"What about the possibility of the President having been struck from the rear...his head exploding off to the right and above...and then that being followed, within a fraction of a second, by a tangential blow by a bullet from the front, or the right front, glancing off the right side of the head? Is there any possibility?" [9]*

The answer was negative. Who saw what that prompted the question of an additional head shot?

**A STRANGE LIE**

The House Select Committee on Assassinations decided the Nix and Muchmore films were not worth studying. They performed a "blur analysis" on the Zapruder film, but not the other two, because neither "included any extensive footage prior to the time of the head shot..." [10] In a footnote, the HSCA gave yet another reason to make the films sound unattractive for any kind of study:

*"[T]he Nix and Muchmore films were taken from a distance of about 2.7 and 2.1 times, respectively, further away from President Kennedy than the Zapruder film." [10]*

This rationale for excluding the films is invalid, and the relative distances stated are false: (1) The Committee associated startle reactions to sound, not sight, so proximity to the source of the shots is more relevant than proximity to Kennedy. (And since Kennedy was moving, no measurements would be true for more than an instant.) (2) The Warren Commission's own map shows that Marie Muchmore was actually closer to the alleged source of the shots, the Depository building, than was Zapruder, and Orville Nix was only 1.4 times further from the building. (3) As for proximity to Kennedy, Muchmore was closer to him during the earlier shots and, at Z-313, only 1.6 (versus 2.1) times further than was Zapruder. Did the Committee have some other reason for excluding these films?

**SIX FEET EARLY**

Surveyors Chester Breneman and Robert West, working with Life Magazine and the Secret Service, created a map of Dealey Plaza correlating frames from the Zapruder film with locations of the car as it moved westward, and tried to establish the site of each shot. On the original map, Breneman

marked the location of the headshot with a "K1" [11] This symbol appears about six or seven feet further east than Z-313. Seven frames before the official head shot, the car would have been at about this same spot, K1.

Mr. and Mrs. William Newman, Jr., stood on the north side of Elm Street to Kennedy's right. They told me Kennedy was directly in front of them when the head shot(s) occurred. [12] The Nix film shows that when the bone flap first becomes apparent, Kennedy is right in front of the Newmans (N-17). The Newmans were adjacent to K1.

Where was the car at Z-313? If the car had remained parallel to the curb as it proceeded, it would not present to Zapruder a sideview until it was directly in front of him. But if, as claimed by witnesses, the car veered to the left at the time of the headshot, it would present a sideview early, while still further east. In the absence of fixed reference points, this sideview would give the illusion the car was right in front of Zapruder — where it was at Nix 24, which is supposed to match Zapruder 313. Just where was the car at Z-313? Which frame was supposed to be K1?

#### READING BETWEEN THE FRAMES

Was the creation of the bone flap accompanied by body movement? Both Newmans report that when Kennedy was hit in the head, before he went backward, he went downward and leftward "like a baseball pitch" across Mrs. Kennedy's lap. This is not the little two-inch forward nod that shows on the films. Newman tried to tell Jim Garrison about it, but Garrison didn't believe him, apparently, because the films do not show it. This movement, in addition to the apparent source of the sound, gave Newman the impression the marksman was "right behind" him. The Newmans were not interviewed by the Warren Commission, even though they were the closest witnesses to the head shot.

This early head shot may have been a tangential blow, as Mr. Olson of the Rockefeller Commission seemed to suspect. According to Captain Philip R. Dodge, who presented a paper on tangential wounds to the Southern Neurosurgical Society in April 1952, tangential strikes do "knock down" the victim. [13]

The HSCA on the effects of high velocity missiles to the head, tangential or otherwise:

*"If the bullet strikes the head, an object of relatively low mass in comparison with the entire body, the movement of the head in the direction of missile travel may be considerable. Rotational movement of the head or of*

*a light weight portion of the body may also occur."* [14]

#### WITNESS TESTIMONY

Kennedy went backward, dramatically. This is not disputed. But the majority of witnesses seem to describe the first part of what the Newmans saw — extreme leftward movement. Vestiges of it seem to be left on the Nix film. Could this be the impact of that earlier bullet, the first head shot? Why did so few witnesses mention the backward action? Their selection as witnesses and their testimony may have been edited. Some may have been too stunned to register the second movement, or they were too busy reacting, hitting the ground, pushing their children down, or looking for the source of the shots. What follows is testimony that seems to corroborate the first part of the action the Newmans saw.

*And then he sort of did this [indicating], put his hand to his forehead and fell in my lap. [15] Jacqueline Kennedy "...pitch forward and to the left," [16] Special Agent Clint Hill*

*... I heard a second report and...I saw pieces of flesh and blood flying through the air and the President slumped out of sight toward Mrs. Kennedy...my reaction at this time was that the shot came from somewhere towards the front, right-hand side of the road. [17] Special Agent Paul Landis*

*I saw one shot strike the President in the right side of the head. The President then fell to the seat to the left toward Mrs. Kennedy. [18] Special Agent Samuel E. Kinney*

*...The last shot seemed to hit his head and cause a noise at the point of impact which made him fall forward and to his left. [19] Special Agent George W. Hickey, Jr. ...I saw the President lean over on Mrs. Kennedy. [20] Special Agent Emory P. Roberts*

*It knocked him completely down on the floor. Over, just slumped completely over. [21] S.M. Holland [Afterward he heard a fourth shot.]*

*... he was looking at him when the first shot was fired, and that he slumped. And when the second shot was fired, he went completely out of sight. [22] Officer Clyde Haygood, quoting unnamed witness.*

*...After the first one, just a few seconds later, there was two more shots fired...I saw some man in the car fall forward..." [23] 6H225 Austin Miller*

*...knocked him just enough forward that he came right on down. [24] A.P photographer James Altgens [Altgens*

told me Kennedy only went forward, and that what appears on the Zapruder film is "an optical illusion." As a supporter of the Warren Commission, he may prefer this explanation to the alternative.]

... pitched forward into Jackie's lap. [Afterwards, Hill heard 2-3 more shots while she "gawked around."] [25] Jean Hill

...She stated the car had proceeded to approximately 12 feet to her right when she heard a second report and saw the President slump to the front of the car...she immediately turned and looked up the hill to the north toward the parking lot but did not see anything... [26] FBI report on Jean Newman

...slump down into the car. [27] Mrs. Joseph E. Dean  
 ...slump forward in his seat. [28] Ewell William Cowser  
 ...slumped Forward in his seat. [29] James L. Simmons  
 ...slump forward. [30] Richard Calvin Dodd  
 ...slumped forward. [31] George A. Davis

...I turned around to find out what happened when two additional shots rang out, and the President slumped into Mrs. Kennedy's lap...during the ride to the hospital while looking back into the car I noticed SA Hill hanging on... [32] Special Agent Roy Kellerman.

Kellerman made the above statement 11/29/63. When testifying before the Warren Commission months later, he changed his story. He said he had been facing the front during the "flurry," that he didn't look back until Hill was on the trunk. [33] The Zapruder film illustrates Kellerman's second version. If frames have been removed, possibly Kellerman was right the first time but was persuaded by the film that he had been mistaken.

#### ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER MISSES SOMETHING

During his testimony before the Warren Commission, Abraham Zapruder was insistent about one thing: what he thought he saw the President do when he was shot. He would tell the Commission what he had seen, then he would show them, using pantomime. But what he couldn't do was point to it in the film — it didn't seem to be there.

In the following passages, [34] I quote Zapruder out of context, but his remarks themselves were often not related to any particular frame Commissioner Wesley Liebler wanted to focus on. Zapruder seemed to be viewing his film as a whole, looking from beginning to end for the missing action. He describes downward-leftward movement that may be what the witnesses describe in the above section, or it could

have happened earlier. Whatever it was, it does seem to be gone from the film.

"Well, as the car came in line almost...I heard the first shot and I saw the President lean over and grab himself like this [holding his left chest area]...For I moment I thought it was... "Oh, he got me,"...[but] I don't believe the President is going to make jokes like this, but before I had a chance to organize my mind, I heard a second shot and then I saw his head opened up..."

"It looks to me like he went like this — did he go to his throat — I don't remember — I thought he went like this [holding both hands on the left side of his chest]. Did it show? [Liebler's response: "Let's turn over to picture 231..."]

"...but the impression was that he was leaning over and not just sitting there and looking over that and grabbing himself at the left side."

In the following passage, reproduced word-for-word, Liebler appears to respond to something Zapruder said that is not in the transcript. something important seems to be left out:

"In 235 both hands are up by his throat there or up to the top of his chest and Mrs. Kennedy is looking at him." "To me it looks like it."

"You mean it looks to you as though he moved a little more sharply perhaps?" "Toward her — there are so many frames...but he leaned over — it would be after the shot was fired, after I heard a sound, he went like this [leaning to the left and holding both hands to the left side of his chest]."

Here is another passage, reproduced word-for-word, that seems to have been crudely cut:

"How about 240 — let's turn over to 240 and there he has turned his head toward the left a little bit more." "There's only about 100 frames — they are so close." "Five frames?" "Five frames is nothing — I believe." "How about 249?"

"No.249 — I just wonder if it was the motion that he went back with that I don't remember."

Perhaps Zapruder's last statement indicates the backward movement remaining on the film made less of an impression than the leftward movement.

#### DAN RATHER

Dan Rather, the only newsman who saw a private screening

of the Zapruder film the day after the assassination, told the nation Kennedy's head "went forward with considerable violence." [35] It appears that he was telling part of the truth.

#### DID CLINT HILL SEE YET ANOTHER HEAD SHOT?

The FBI claims that Clinton Hill first places a hand on the presidential limousine at frame Z-343 — 30 frames after the head shot, one foot on the bumper at Z-368, and both feet at Z-381. [36] The Muchmore film shows something quite different: Hill already has both hands (and possibly his right foot) on the car by M-62 — only 20 frames after the official head shot on that film. This film seems to have been drastically cut. Because it shows a closer view of the assassination, and the back of the head? There is something else:

*"I ran to the Presidential limousine. Just about as I reached it, there was another sound, which was different than the first sound...as though someone was shooting a revolver into a hard object—it seemed to have some type of an echo. I put my right foot, I believe it was, on the left rear step of the automobile, and I had a hold of the handgrip with my hand, when the car lurched forward. I lost my footing and I had to run about three or four more steps before I could get back up in the car."*  
*"Between the time I originally grabbed the handhold and until I was up on the car...the second noise that I heard had removed a portion of the President's head."*  
 [37]

What is left of the Muchmore film shows the top of Kennedy's skull already in the air — before Hill reached the car for the first time. Did Hill, without realizing it, witness the last of the flurry?

#### THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

The FBI said Marie Muchmore filmed the assassination from the concrete structure near the reflecting pool, a few feet north of where the straight wall meets the curving one. [38] I have confirmed this laterally (she is not too far to the left or to the right), but not vertically: She would have been as high as Zapruder — yet her viewpoint reflects a lower position, almost indistinguishable from Mary Moorman's.

Full frames of the Zapruder film include the area of the south lawn where Muchmore would have to be (based on FBI's and my own lateral geometric analysis) if she were on the lawn — and she is not there.

David Lifton graciously sent me FBI re-enactment photos purporting to show Muchmore where the FBI put her. The photos were indeed taken from the structure, and they seem to

duplicate Muchmore's viewpoint — but they almost prove Muchmore was not up there during the assassination: The viewpoint reveals the camera was not held at eye level; it was set on the low wall bordering the structure. The top of the wall is, at most, waist level with average-sized adults behind it, and above eye level of adults on the grass in front of it. The witness map in Josiah Thompson's "Six Seconds in Dallas" places Muchmore on the grass.

According to the FBI map, Muchmore was closer to the Depository building (probably even closer in reality) than Zapruder. Yet, her film does not show the extreme startle reaction seen in Zapruder 318. And Gerald Posner, author of Case Closed makes a strange claim about the Zapruder film:

*"The largest spastic movement by Zapruder came at frames 313-314, the moment of the head shot."* [39]

The blur in these two frames is not much greater than the blurs that occur earlier in the film, and is nothing compared with the sudden frantic sideways smear of Z-318.

Why did the HSCA mistate Muchmore's location and exclude her film from their blur analysis? Why did Gerald Posner lie about the "largest spastic movement by Zapruder"? Could Zapruder's extreme reaction and Muchmore's non-reaction at this time mean the last shots were fired by a gunman close to Zapruder — and far from Muchmore? Why did the FBI take their re-enactment pictures from such an unrealistic position? Was she really on the grass? Was her image removed from the Zapruder film? (Too bad the Bronson film does not include relevant parts of the lawn.) Was Zapruder's response related to the sound of multiple shots at Kennedy's head?

#### INSIGHTS FROM AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOGRAPHY

I have been told that by the early 1960's, an outgrowth of the technology used to analyze, on huge screens, the grainy photos taken from high altitudes, was the ability to alter the images, using multiple projectors. They went from interpreting the grains to moving them around. I cannot document this, but the concept is worth sharing.

#### INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Nix stood on the south side of Elm Street; his perspective shows the President's limousine with fixed reference points in every frame. If the critical seven frames described earlier had been removed, the car would appear to jump from place to place. On the other hand, because Nix filmed from afar, Kennedy's head does not show up very well. Muchmore was on the left, but mostly behind the limousine during the head

shot sequence. At that time, the car was moving away from her, from foreground to background, rather than laterally across her path, from right to left — making it harder to detect the removal of any frames. The Zapruder film presents very different problems for the tamperer. The right side of the head shows up very well, but there is a critical stretch when no fixed reference points are in the background, except for blurry patterns in the terrain. If frames were removed during this interval, it would not be obvious. If the car slowed down, many frames could have accumulated which could have been removed without making the car jump from place to place. Their disappearance would, however, make the car go faster. A large number of witnesses said the car did slow down or stop, something that no longer shows. Thus, time has been removed from the films without leaving a trace, and frames have disappeared into the fourth dimension. Provocative shapes remain.

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#### Notes

1. 5H180, Jacqueline Kennedy
2. 6H214, Jean Hill
3. 18H762, George Hickey, Jr.
4. 18H732, Samuel Kinney
5. 22H837, Charles Brehm
6. 2H81, Roy Kellerman, entry into head
7. 2H85, Roy Kellerman checks car
8. President's Commission on CIA Activities, p.28, Olson
9. Ibid. p.30
10. 6HSCA19, Films
11. Breneman letter; map and figures before they became C.E. 884, courtesy of Jim Marrs
12. Personal communication with Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Newman, 9/15/93
13. Dodge, PR, Meirowsky, AM. Tangential wounds of scalp and skull. *J Neurosurg* 1952; 9:472-483, p.477.
14. 7HSCA171, Head moves in direction of missile
15. 5H180, Jacqueline Kennedy
16. 2H139, Clint Hill
17. 18H755, Paul Landis
18. 18H731, Samuel E. Kinney
19. 18H762, George W. Hickey, Jr.
20. 18H737, Emory P. Roberts
21. 6H243, S.M. Holland
22. 6H298, Officer Clyde Haygood
23. 6H225, Austin Miller
24. 6H518, James Altgens
25. 6H214, Jean Hill
26. 22H843, Jean Newman
27. 22H839, Mrs. Joseph E. Dean
28. 22H836, Ewell William Cowsert
29. 22H833, James L. Simmons
30. 22H835, Richard Calvin Dodd
31. 22H837, George A. Davis
32. 18H726, Roy Kellerman
33. 2H74,76,77, Roy Kellerman
34. 7H571-575, Abraham Zapruder
35. Crossfire, by Jim Marrs, Carroll & Graf
36. 15H699, FBI on Clint Hill
37. 2H138, Clint Hill
38. 5H140, CE 884, FBI on Muchmore
39. Posner, Gerald, Case Closed. New York: Random House 1993, p.323.

## NORTH OF ELM ON HOUSTON

by  
Dennis Ford

After the murder of President Kennedy, Dallas police and citizens congregated on Elm St. in front of the Book Depository and in the train yards to the west. But two witnesses—Richard Randolph Carr and James Worrell, Jr.—reported separate occurrences in the less crowded area north of Elm St. on Houston St. that suggested a conspiracy to assassinate the President. To complicate the picture, two other witnesses who were present north of Elm on Houston—James Romack and Sam Pate—gave accounts that refuted aspects of the stories of the first pair.

It might be instructive to examine the statements of the four witnesses with an eye toward creating a coherent account of what did and did not occur on Houston St. behind the Book Depository in the minutes immediately after the assassination. It may seem, at first, as if this is a game of dueling witnesses, but it may be possible to establish a few principles of evidence that can help sort out some of the contradictions. In this

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