

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY

*File C - The
Couch Film*

With Compliments

Gower Street London WC1E 6BT Telephone: 01-387 7050 Telex: 28722

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

GOWER STREET
LONDON WC1E 6BT

Telex 28722

24 September 1980

Telephone: 01-387 7050

The Film Archivist
Lyndon B Johnson Library
2313 Red River,
Austin, Texas 78705 USA

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is my understanding that, in 1973, WFAA-TV in Dallas donated to your library archives all their audio and video tapes, and films, concerning the events of November 22, 1963 in connection with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

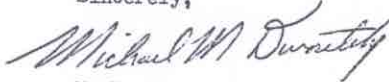
I am doing research for a book or series of articles on this subject and these materials could prove to be a valuable resource. Much of this material (especially the film) has never been analyzed seriously to see what information it might provide for the historical record.

Is it possible to obtain copies of films? Of particular interest is a film taken by WFAA cameraman Malcolm Couch in Dealey Plaza immediately after the shots were fired. This film segment is approximately one to two minutes long. It begins as the open car in which Couch was riding approached the Texas School Book Depository and continues until Couch stopped filming and left the area.

Because of the distance involved, it would be rather difficult for me to arrange to visit the LBJ Library in order to view this and other films, although it would be highly desirable.

I would of course be willing to pay reasonable expenses for having a copy of the film made and sent to me, and would also appreciate knowing what restrictions if any might apply to publication of individual frames from the WFAA films. Could you please send me further information on these questions (i.e., how much would a copy cost, and whether there is any restriction on publication of individual frames)?

Sincerely,


M. M. Dworetsky



THE LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78705

rcvd
8 Oct 80
MJB

October 2, 1980

Mr. Michael M. Dworetsky
Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Dear Mr. Dworetsky:

I wish I could confirm your understanding about the location of the WFAA materials. In 1973 the station did bring a large quantity of audiovisual materials to us, but preferred not to execute a deed of gift to the Library. In 1976 station representatives took back all these items for the stated purpose of making preservation copies. (The Library was unable to do this because the materials were not legally ours.)

Of the lot, the only items which were then returned to us were seven of the ten rolls of film listed in the WFAA log.

I have checked the log for the film segment you inquire about, and found two candidates. One of those is on Roll #9, which the Library did not receive. The other is on Roll #1 according to the log, but had been spliced out of the film prior to the time we got it.

Thus I regret we cannot be of assistance to you in this matter.

Very truly yours,

E. Philip Scott
Audiovisual Archivist

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
GOWER STREET
LONDON WC1E 6BT

Telex 28722

10 October 1980

Telephone: 01-387 7050

Mr. E. Philip Scott
Audiovisual Archivist
Lyndon B. Johnson Library
Austin, Tx 78705 USA

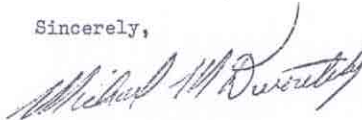
Dear Mr. Scott:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 24 September regarding the WFAA-TV film taken by Mr. Malcolm Couch in Dealey Plaza on 22 November 1963. This film has a rather curious history of being somewhat inaccessible to researchers, and your check of the logs tends to confirm this. I have contacted WFAA, but they were initially not very forthcoming. A photocopy of their letter is enclosed, and your comments would be appreciated. I am contacting them again to present them with your information.

The film itself is a very important piece of evidence which can be used to establish with some precision the locations of various key witnesses immediately after the shots. I had hoped to be able to do just this, provided that I could see the film. Perhaps the most important comments I have read concerning this film are those contained in a book by Howard Roffman called Presumed Guilty, published in 1976.

As the film was featured in Warren Commission testimony, the National Archives in Washington may have a copy, and I will contact them. My original understanding that you had this and other films was obtained from a 27 March 1973 New York Times article (p.56) stating that WFAA had donated their materials to your library.

Sincerely,



(Dr.) M. M. Dworetzky

WFAA-TV

ABC Affiliate Communications Center Dallas, Texas 75202 (214) 748-9631

September 19, 1980

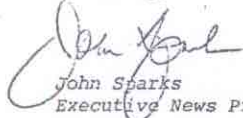
Mr. M. M. Dworetsky
Department of Physics and Astronomy
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Dear Mr. Dworetsky:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding our footage of the Kennedy assassination.

We receive requests for our footage from time to time, but are unable to handle them. A videotape copy of our entire collection is on file at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. The director of the library is Harry Middleton. Perhaps he might be able to assist you.

Sincerely,



John Sparks
Executive News Producer

sgb

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

GOWER STREET
LONDON WC1E 6BT

Telex 28722

10 October 1980

Telephone: 01-387 7050

Mr. John Sparks
Executive News Producer
WFAA-TV
Communications Center
Dallas, Texas 75202 USA

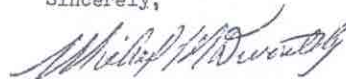
Dear Mr. Sparks:

When I received your letter of 19 September, I contacted the Lyndon B. Johnson Library regarding the Kennedy assassination materials and specifically the Malcolm Couch film described in my previous letter of August 28 to your station. According to their Archivist, Mr. E. P. Scott, the library archives do not contain the film sequence in question. I enclose a photocopy of Mr. Scott's letter for your information.

Unfortunately, for analytical purposes, the original film or a good copy is required. A videotape copy would be hopelessly inadequate. In any case, the Archivist points out that they have no videotapes and that either (a) the Couch film sequence was excised from the library's rolls of film, or (b) the roll containing it is itself missing and presumably in the physical possession of WFAA-TV.

This particular film sequence is evidence of considerable significance. Could you please investigate further?

Sincerely,



(Dr.) M. M. Dworetzky

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

GOWER STREET
LONDON WC1E 6BT

Telex 28722

10 October 1980

Telephone: 01-387 7050

Audiovisual Archivist
The National Archives
Ninth & Constitution Avenues, NW
Washington, DC 20408 USA

Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Documents,
Photographs, and Films in the National Archives

Dear Sir:

I am undertaking a review of the scientific evidence and other evidence developed by the Warren Commission and House Select Committee on Assassinations. It would be of great help in my work if I could obtain copies of certain documents and photographs in the Archives, or, at least, to ascertain their existence and availability for viewing.

The first problem is that I am rather new to all this and do not know how to go about obtaining these copies, how much I might have to pay, etc. and whether I can obtain copies of documents by mail. Could you please send me information on this?

Secondly, I am having some difficulty determining the whereabouts of a specific film taken in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963 by WFAA-TV cameraman Malcolm Couch. This film was shown to Warren Commission attorney Mr. D. Belin during Mr. Couch's deposition taken in Dallas (Warren Comm. Hearings, VI, 158-159). Supposedly WFAA gave all its films to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas, in 1973, but the audiovisual archivist, Mr. E. P. Scott, informs me that the sequence in question is not among the films at the library. Do you have this film or a copy at the National Archives?

The (16mm?) film can be described as follows. Couch was riding in an open press car in the motorcade with other photographers, and his car was on Houston Street turning left onto Elm Street when he heard shots and began filming. The camera was panned across the front of the Texas School Book Depository, and as the car completed the turn and stopped, some photographers got out. Couch remained with the car as it continued on Elm Street to the Triple Underpass, then got out and walked back towards the TSBD, filming as he went. Eventually he stopped filming and left Dealey Plaza.

Any assistance you can give me in locating this very important film would be

WFAA-TV

ABC Affiliate Communications Center Dallas, Texas 75202 (214) 748-9631

postmark Oct 30
rcvd Nov 6

October 24, 1980

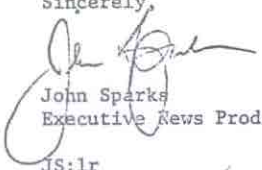
Dr. M. M. Dworetsky
Department of Physics and Astronomy
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Dear Dr. Dworetsky:

The Lyndon Johnson Library in Austin has a copy of every frame of video
WFAA-TV has in its possession on the Kennedy assassination.

I must assume the footage you are trying to locate is missing.

Sincerely,


John Sparks
Executive News Producer

JS:lr



General Services Administration National Archives and Records Service Washington, DC 20408

Date : November 17, 1980

Reply to
Attn of : NNFN

Subject: Records of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, 95th Congress.

To : Dr. M. M. Dworetzky
Department of Physics and Astronomy
University College London
Gower Street
London, WC1E 6 BT
ENGLAND

Under the rules of the United States House of Representatives, the records of its Select Committee on Assassinations, 95th Congress, in the National Archives Building, are not open to the public, except for such records as have been published.

The select committee has printed its findings in House Report No. 95-1828, 95th Congress, 2d Session, March 29, 1979 (686 pp.) and the testimony of its witnesses and other evidence in twelve (12) volumes of hearings and of appendices to them.

We have examined the indices to the select committee's records and have located no reference to Malcolm Couch or to his film or to the WFAA-TV Station.

We suggest that you write to WFAA-TV; the station may know of the disposition of the film of Malcolm Couch, or of his whereabouts.

We have referred your letter to our Motion Picture and Sound Recording Branch for a separate reply to you on the question of the film.

GEORGE P. PERROS
Legislative and Natural Resources Branch
Civil Archives Division



General Services Administration National Archives and Records Service Washington, DC 20408

November 4, 1980

Dr. M.M. Dworetzky
University College London
Gower Street
London, WC1E 6BT ENGLAND

Dear Dr. Dworetzky:

Thank you for your letter of October 10, 1980, concerning the records of the Warren Commission.

We can furnish electrostatic copies of records for 20 cents a page with a minimum charge of \$3.00 and 8" X 10" black and white prints of photographs for \$4.65 each. To order, please send a check or money order, payable to the National Archives Trust Fund (NNFJ), to the Cashier, National Archives (GSA), Washington, DC 20408.

We do not have the Couch film among the Warren Commission records. We have referred a copy of your letter to our Legislative and Natural Resources Branch for information concerning the records of the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Sincerely,

Marion Johnson
MARION JOHNSON
Judicial and Fiscal Branch
Civil Archives Division

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13/Nov/80