

Paul Keck  
313 Linda Ave.,  
Lawthorne, NY 10532

2/4/96

Dear Mr. Keck,

From the xerox of your letter dated January 23, here yesterday, I assume you sent it to ~~many~~<sup>many</sup> people, all you believed might have the information you seek about the Zapruder film. From the content I assume you know little about it. I therefore urge you to find some way of evaluating your sources because the most undependable of sources abound in this field. For example, in Harry Livingstone's current book his made-up account of the altering of that film is entirely fiction.

I go into what Zapruder told the Commission about his film and his taking of in at several points in the first of the Whitewash series. In Whitewash II I include what he told the Secret Service the very day of the assassination about it and the close to illegible Secret Service handwritten memo with which it forwarded a print to Washington that night.

LIFE reverted the rights to the film to the Zapruder estate. It is headed by his son Henry, who is a lawyer in Washington. Technically you have to ask the estate for copies but they are widely available. I understand the clearest version was in a PBS broadcasts but I do not have it.

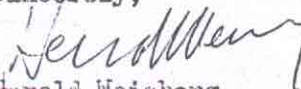
If the government seizure of the rifle and refusal to return it to Marina can be taken as precedent and not being a lawyer I do not know, then it did not have to buy or negotiate the purchase of the film. It could just have taken it.

In general your letter reflects a ~~lack~~ lack of knowledge and your having been influenced by the abundance of books not of fact but of theory that is usually refuted by fact. Some of what you ask is well and publicly known and is in the disclosed official information for as much as more than 30 years. Some reflects your having been influenced by those who regard themselves as Perry Masons when they are closer to Keystone Kops.

If you intend serious work you have to begin by eliminating what is not dependable that is widely reported and then to learn what the available dependable sources are.

Not having had the interest you express in the film I do not know offhand what those sources are but perhaps The National Archives can be a beginning point.

Sincerely,

  
Harold Weisberg



1/23/96

Dear Sirs,

I am researching an article concerning the filming of the assassination of John F. Kennedy by Abraham Zapruder. I seek information regarding the chronology of the day of the assassination and subsequent time period thereafter as experienced by Mr. Zapruder. The article will focus on the many interesting aspects and questions arising from Mr. Zapruder's capture of this event on film. For example, where did Mr. Zapruder go immediately after leaving the scene of the assassination? Where was the film processed, how many copies were made and when, and by which processing facilities? Were any special procedures undertaken in the processing of this highly valuable film in order to give, for example, the highest image resolution possible? What was Zapruder's interaction with federal agents, government officials, police and other private and public individuals during and after that fateful day? Who contacted who as regards the sale of the film, and how many individuals, companies, agencies, etc. made offers to buy or obtain the film? One of the most intriguing questions which I have not heard answered is this: did the Federal Government attempt to purchase the film, or express any interest in obtaining it? Why didn't the U.S. government simply outbid Time-Life, which it easily could have done, in consideration of the potentially high degree of importance of this film as potential evidence? Couldn't the government legally seize the film as their property in light of national security and other considerations?

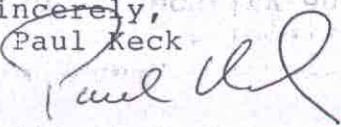
Other questions arise, in particular considering the role of Time-Life in their acquisition of the film. What was their purpose in acquiring the film? And why were they so adamant about not letting it be viewed except by the most select of officials? Today, who owns the film and how accessible is it to be viewed by the public?

These are a few of the many interesting questions which I have seen only the scantest of information on. Do you have any information which can help me, directly or indirectly, to answer these questions? Has any printed material addressed these questions at length, for example in a book, magazine article, etc? In particular, do you know of any at length interviews with Mr. Zapruder which might also give the day's chronology and following days of the events of Mr. Zapruder's life?

Finally, are there any good sources to obtain photographs and documents relating to the Zapruder film, for example, particular frames of the film, and other general photographs pertaining to the assassination (i.e. photo of Texas Book Depository, aerial view of Dealey Plaza, other photos of that day, etc) with which I may obtain to illustrate my article, and by which I may obtain permission to reprint?

Your help is of greatest importance. I look forward to your reply as soon as possible. Sincerely,

Paul Keck

  
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