

Mr. Robert Katz
650 West Cliveden St.,
Philadelphia, PA 19119

7/18/94

Dear Mr. Katz,

You conclude your letter of the 14th saying you will welcome any feedback from me. Intellectually you will be on safer ground in holding forth on the certainty that the moon is made of green cheese.

Some of what you say is past ridiculousness, like Oswald could fire as the best shots in the world because he had, you say—and you just made it up because you have an absolute unwillingness to face the realities — "seven months of experience in handling his rifle." Your profound basis for this is "I have not even fired a cap gun." And the proof? In those seven months of "handling his rifle" he left not a single print where it would hold prints on those places he had to have held it to "handle" it.

You have every right to waste whatever of your time you want to waste but you abuse my willingness to try to be responsive and informative when you refuse to confront any reality, make up what you think is congenial to what you want to believe anyway, and without have read the dependable, factual books that are available quote the obvious fakes like Mortal Error, which is Donahue's, with Manning being the hired pen.


If you read that drak you are aware of what they said about me. That gave you an opportunity to learn for yourself whether they are at all dependable. But you did not ask me because you want to believe the impossibility they made up and cite it as your opinion. Well, what they said about me is false. We never had any such discussion and there was never any reason to because with the advent of what could be fatal illness in 1975 I made arrangement for my records and they have not been without a home since then. I had no interest in having them at Maryland. And never discussed that with anyone, ever.

Donahue was p'ed off at me because I told him what he postulated was impossible and then told him where he could see the proof. It is in the pictures and after he did all that damage his publisher finally had to face it. All the damage I do not take time for but some was outrageous and indecent.

I was wrong in trusting the FBI, from which I got that 24 second business. However, with the slide control that model had, rather than a click control, it is not impossible that from time to time, under the emotional stress, Zapruder's finger slipped. I do not know that it happened.

Please do not expect any further replies. You refuse to learn what fact us available and you seek to do the impossible from that fact, ^{concoct} a theory that you like of Oswald's guilt. If that is you desire, by all means continue. But without me.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

Robert Katz
630 West Cliveden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19119

July 14, 1994

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21702

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your note and the book Photographic Whitewash. I have read through the book once and intend to read it again. I do not agree with all of your analyses but I was persuaded by some of them.

An interesting thing that the book highlights is how self-serving J. Edgar Hoover was. I think that Hoover's life was one long attempt to justify himself and the agency he created. I suppose that such behavior has been typical of bureaucrats throughout history.

Until I read your book I had never encountered the theory that the Zapruder film was actually exposed at approximately 24 frames per second, and not 18.3 frames per second as the Warren Commission said. After I read the book I considered your theory and I now find myself agreeing with it. Curiously, however, the speedup of the Zapruder film reinforces my belief that Oswald acted alone. I have always had a problem with those (such as Gerald Posner) who assert that Oswald would have had the nerve to stay at the window shooting for seven or eight seconds, given the large number of police officers and Secret Service agents in the area. I now think that he could not have had so much nerve, and that he probably fired three shots in a little over five seconds. (My best guess is that he fired his first shot at Z-189, his second at Z-237, and his third at Z-312. I am well aware of the meaning of the expression "best guess" when I use it.)

The 24 frames-per-second exposure would also speed up the motorcade to about 15 miles per hour, not the 11.3 miles per hour the Warren Commission posited. This sounds right. I note in this connection that Clint Hill had to sprint to catch up with the Presidential limousine as it traveled down Elm Street. I do not think it is unreasonable to assume that the thirty-one year old Hill was able to run a forty yard dash in five seconds, which is equivalent to running at 17 miles per hour. (The world's record for the hundred yard dash in 1963 was 9.1 seconds, or a bit over 22 miles per hour.) If Hill was able to sprint at 17 miles per hour, and if the limousine was traveling at 11.3 miles per hour, I submit that Hill would have caught up to it easily.

However, the Nix and Muchmore films appear to show Hill having much difficulty catching up to the limousine; he barely made it to the limousine's step board and he was almost thrown off it and dragged down Elm Street. I therefore conclude that the limousine was traveling at closer to fifteen miles per hour when Hill was sprinting towards it.

Now to your note:

I agree with the Warren Commission Report's essential conclusion, but disagree with many of the findings made by the Commission in coming to that conclusion. Some of the points on which I disagree with the Commission can be found in this letter.

I think that the most damning pieces of physical evidence against Oswald were CE 567 and CE 569, the nose and base fragments of a bullet which the FBI found in the interior of the President's limousine. It is my understanding (and you may correct me if I am wrong) that tests show that these fragments came from a bullet that was fired from Oswald's rifle. I also believe that the only person who could have fired that rifle at the President's limousine as it traveled down Elm Street was its owner, Lee Harvey Oswald. I therefore conclude that Oswald fired at least one bullet at the limousine, and that he did so because he intended to kill one or more of the limousine's passengers. I also believe that CE 567 and CE 569, taken with the rest of the evidence I have seen or heard of--including a respectable part of the material in Photographic Whitewash, and in particular the FBI interview of Phil Willis (pp. 181-183)--establish a convincingly clear case against Oswald. I'll spare you an explanation in this letter, although I would be happy--in fact, honored--to have you review and criticize my (not particularly original) assassination reconstruction if you should ever wish to do so.

I agree with you that an analysis of the Zapruder film, however detailed, is not by itself enough to determine the number of shots fired. I would, however, argue that the film clearly shows the results of at least two bullets impacting: one (on Connally) at Z-238, and one (on Kennedy) at Z-313.

I agree with you that the number of shots fired in Dealey Plaza is not necessarily probative of anything. I myself suspect that four shots were fired, and that Oswald fired only three of them. If I am right in my suspicion, my best guess (I know I am using that expression again) is that a Secret Service agent fired the fourth and last shot, either accidentally (because of nerves or a loss of balance) or on purpose (because he wanted to return fire). I had thought this even before the appearance of Bonar Menninger's book Mortal Error. (I found Mortal Error original and provocative. I disagree strongly with its conclusion.) I

note in this connection that according to their own statements at least three of the Secret Service agents in the security car (George Hickey, Paul Landis, and Glen Bennett) drew their weapons during or immediately after the assassination. (See Appendix A, Mortal Error, pp. 293, 296, 297, 298, and 299. Menninger's material comes from the volumes of the Warren Commission Report.) I find it hard to believe that none of the three agents would have been tempted to pull the trigger in such circumstances. I also believe that if an agent fired a shot, the Secret Service would have wanted, for various reasons, to conceal the fact from the public.

I admit that Oswald's guilt is called into question by the NRA sharpshooters' inability to duplicate the shooting attributed to him. The best counterargument I can make to your point is that Oswald had something the sharpshooters did not, which was seven months' experience in handling his rifle. I would argue that Oswald therefore must have known all about his rifle's peculiarities, and in particular about the peculiarities of sighting and of operating the bolt. I am no expert on firearms (I have never even fired a cap gun), but I do know that as one uses a piece of machinery, one accustoms oneself to the machine's quirks. With this in mind, I believe that if anyone could have fired three shots (two accurate) in five seconds from Oswald's rifle, it would have been Oswald himself--mediocre marksman or not.

I also agree with you that the Warren Commission failed to take into account a lot of evidence in composing its Report. Additionally, even though I do not agree with many of your conclusions, I am very impressed with what appears to be your encyclopedic knowledge of the evidence of the assassination. I would therefore welcome any feedback you might have to this letter.

Sincerely yours,


Robert Katz