

4/24/01

Dear Dave ,

Your draft #1 on Willis' reliability is magnificent!

If you have not sent it a few small suggestions, on the remote event Kurtz is ignorant enough to contest it. Have you thought of sending it as soon as you can and doing that with anything else you can? I think it would be a good idea for several reasons I do not now take time for. Mail just here and only an hour before my early supper.

On faking, you have limited yourself to the time of the autopsy. Some of the nutty claims is that it was much later, when the Secret Service had that and other film. I will be going into this in some detail when I get back to Fetzer. But, briefly, what the assassination ignoramuses who consider themselves experts, scholars or both are to/uninformed about the realities to know is that the existing film defeats the purpose of any faking. Or, if it had been faked it would have been self-defeating because all the film, Zapruder's, the autopsy photos and the X-rays- as they now stand- all prove the opposite of the official "solution" because all refute them and all prove a conspiracy.

On what the Commission did not do and all the ignored FBI reports, there is always "atzenback memo esp. ~~one~~ paragraph numbered 1. *which has never been included in a book.*

It was ~~the~~ past time to go after Kurtz and you could not have done it any better! Right tone, too. Bravo!

I think you should tell Kurtz that you intend to use Z202 and 337 and 8 among the photographs when you get around to listing them.

I have written you separately about the Oswald-Lovelady bit that I hope could make tonight's mail

I'm proud of you!

Harold

Draft #1

May, 2001

Phil Willis' Reliability.

Kurtz Point: Kurtz observes that Willis testified to the "motorcade" stopping on Elm Street and also to the back of JFK's head being blown out. He writes that: "Both of these claims directly contradict Wrono's claims about the film." Briggs wants comment on Willis' reliability and in the final report commentary suggests some insert to back up Willis' reliability.

I decline to insert something on Willis' reliability. The real question with this issue is two fold: a) Kurtz's lack of knowledge about the assassination; and b) his omission of information from Fetzer's book (that he cited in another context) that proved his comments to be entirely unjustified.

I observe before passing on to my examination of the Willis issue that the FBI, the Warren Commission staff, the Dallas Police, CBS investigators, NBC, Life magazine, investigative reporters, and critics of every stripe and shade universally believed then, and believe today, Willis to be fully creditable beyond question--medical doctors, lawyers, philosophers, private detective, ex-FBI agents, camera and film experts, housewives, historians, etc., etc. His credibility sorely worried the FBI, who needless to write, not only has extraordinary professional experience but also have excellent abilities

in judging these qualities in a witness. He was an impressive, honorable, solid person, who was quite rational, logical, and credible in every aspect of his life.

Let me make a general observation and then take each of Kurtz' irrelevant and trivial items one at a time before making a final comment.

General observations.

A. Willis did not say the whole motorcade stopped, which is what Kurtz says. Willis spoke just of the JFK limousine.

B. Kurtz' twin observations on Willis do not rise to the level of reliability questioning and upon critical, careful examination are adscititious. In the first place Kurtz does not relate them to the issue developed by me in the text. He neither shows, nor does he explain, nor does he in any manner demonstrate that the fact has any relevance to Willis' reliability. Willis statements do not and could not have any relationship to his reliability, let alone as Kurtz expresses it "direct" bearing, whatever that unfortunate word choice means to Kurtz. And, they are not in any way one may construct the manuscript, "claims" but the normal conclusions from evidence objectively presented. "Claims" suggests personal opinion or impulse as the compass of history and not the scholarship that throughout I argue is central to the study of the assassination.

I further note that Willis' statements are on ex post facto incidents occurring after he had snapped #5; that slide and the evidence it holds (in context) being the major fact under discussion in the text and the crux of the matter.

The car stopped.

It is not self-evident why Willis' testimony (6H497) that JFK's car halted affects his reliability as a witness to his photography, nor unfortunately does Kurtz in any way

suggest how to approach his simply bald assertion. What is wrong with Willis thinking that? Why, absolutely nothing.

I further observe, as he did not, that Willis was not alone in holding to a belief that the limousine stopped. Scores of the bystanders on Dealey Plaza thought that the limousine stopped, but they were misled not by a stop but by the illusion of one, which illusion was real to them. This is common knowledge among those who are well versed in the crime's documentary base.

For ease of convenience and to avoid the use of many references and also because Kurtz refers to the book later on in his prelim report I observe Vincent Palamara, in Fetzer's wretched Murder in Dealey Plaza (2000), has a wobbly chapter on "59 Witnesses: Delay on Elm Street," pp. 119-127, where he lists 59 people who saw the car apparently stop. Since Kurtz refers to other content in this book, it is strange, indeed impertinent one might say to his observations, that he did not mention that these three score people reported the same thing Willis did. His omission flies to the heart of his assertion Willis' credibility is in travail for the 59 witnesses to the same phenomenon reveal that a reasonable person could have seen such an illusion and have believed it to be real.

In 1963-4 this question worried the Commission, which again Kurtz does not refer to or realize occurred, who with the FBI, struggled to ascertain the truth. By a careful review of the assassination films, primarily the Zapruder film, they determined that the limousine in fact did not stop, but only momentarily slowed. The Report even addresses this fact and provides the results of the study, R651 [not indexed in the WR].

It is understandable. Greer, the Secret Service Agent driving the limousine, heard the sounds of shooting and/or disturbance in the rear seats and followed what is a normal reaction. He spontaneously turned to glance at the rear seat and in so doing for a moment slowed--split second is probably more accurate--but did not stop, the limousine. He was only driving at 11.2 miles per hour and the slight lowering of the speed for a moment before speeding up and away created the illusion among many that Greer had halted the car, when in fact he had not.

Willis' angle of viewing enhanced the possibility of an illusion. He stood to the left, far rear, looking at an angle toward the car after he heard the shots. He mistook as did many others a slowing for a stop. This in no conceivable way could bring into question his reliability as a witness to when and how he snapped his camera, where he stood, how he moved, and similar important things; nor does it to any degree whatsoever damage my or any scholar's reliance on Willis. Kurtz should have known this.

2. Back of the head blowout.

A. Willis stated he saw the back of JFK's head blown out; but Willis was mistaken. Briggs believes that since Kurtz addresses it this requires comment with respect to the witness' reliability.

B. I observe that Kurtz utilized Groden, Killing the President, as his source. He seems not aware of a scholarship question here; Groden is a booby-trapped "source." i) Groden is notorious for corruption of sources and twisting of evidence to substantiate his various special pleadings. ii) Groden is grossly ignorant of the facts of the assassination. Did Kurtz check the original source used by Groden to see if in fact Willis said that?

C. Comment breaks into two parts, the witnesses of a blow out and the evidence that proves there was not one.

i) Many witnesses asserted they saw a hole or blow out in the back of JFK's head. That is true that they reported this and the very number of them seems significant--to the errant and non-critical student of the JFK assassination that is. Willis saw a blow out. Referring once more to Fetzer's dreadful shame of a book for ease of immediate use and Kurtz's use of it, and to avoid the prolific documentation entailed in a person to person recitation of descriptions, Dr. Gary Aguilar has a chapter entitled, "The Converging Medical Case for Conspiracy in the Death of JFK," pp. 175-218, that on page 199 has a chart listing 42 individuals who claimed to have seen a blow out in the back of the President's head. There are others. Kurtz had this book and obviously made reference to it, but he chose for reasons unknown also to not bring forward this information that would have shown Willis' testimony as not aberrant or irresponsible but in keeping with his perception, which was real to him.

ii) I reiterate in part what I have previously said in the manuscript. The perceived blow out was an illusion; there was no blow out. Let me in this adumbrated presentation divide my comment into two areas, general and scientific.

I). General. This faulty view rests on a number of general factors. First, there was a misperception based on lack of detailed medical knowledge of the wound and unwarranted presumptions, haste, fleeting glances, and excitement of the event. These men and women who reported seeing such a damage were under stress at the time, a condition where many things can occur in that marvelous complexity of human

physiology and frail memory of our body that in normal times and ordinary circumstances one would not expect would happen.

In addition to the exceptional stress, witnesses recollections were colored and influenced by having over the years to run a gauntlet of comment and observations by peers and the papers, by the madness of reporters and by the inanity of many, some truly addled, "private researchers" who pummeled them with questions laden with assertions of "fact" made by others. All to the extent of influencing their recall fidelity and inserting ghosts or fabulous-ary.

What these witnesses saw and what Willis saw was probably the scalp with portions of the skull and matter attached flapped back from the explosion of JFK's right front head wound that also exposed the inner head. Pieces of skull were also knocked or blown loose by the head shot and flew out exposing additional matter.

II) Scientific. At least two independent methods can be used to substantiate that there was no blow out in the back of the head, these facts are irrefutable and definitive even if they do not fit the wishful parameters of the theorists, the imaginations of the irrational ones, and the false scholarship of many critics. These are autopsy photographs and z337.

The first of the two, the autopsy photos of JFK, show the back of his head intact, not blown out. While one could use Weisberg's books, especially the latter ones dealing with the corruption of the medical evidence by federal agencies, to provide references to this, or I could give you a copy of the National Archives original documents, I instead again refer to another part of Fetzer's sick book, a volume Kurtz previously mentioned and apparently puts stock in, but again chose to omit from his commentary on this point.

On page 178 Aguilar prints an autopsy photograph of the back of JFK's head. JFK is laying on the autopsy table at Bethesda and the back of the head is intact.

It was impossible to have faked this autopsy photograph because of at least four factors--time, means, facts, and result. On time. The impossibility of overcoming chronological strictures meant it could not be faked. No window of time existed for a forgery to have been committed. On means. Technological barriers foreclosed forgery. No known way existed to accomplish a fake of film requiring such scientific complexity and subject matter sophistication in the execution of an alleged scenario. On facts. And, the absence of a definitive critical factual base to rest the perpetrated forgery upon absolutely and forever excludes it from consideration as a forgery. The putative fakers could not in that iron time frame imposed upon their alleged malevolent work have known what details or facts they had to fake in order to simulate the head shot damage. The investigation in Dallas simply had not defined the evidentiary essentials and thus there was nothing to fake.

On logic. Further, the patent for proof that no forgery occurred lies in the imperative of logic. A fakery of the autopsy materials to hide a conspiracy could not have transpired for the photographs establish the perdurable fact that a conspiracy killed JFK. That is a circle that cannot be squared. You do not forge to hide the fact a conspiracy killed JFK and then have the forgery proof a conspiracy absolutely existed.

In addition to the autopsy material establishing that there was no blow out of the rear of JFK's head, there is also Zapruder frame 337 that independently affirms the same fact. This frame depicts the President immediately after the headshot, moving as he twists into his wife's side. The back of his head is distinctly shown. It is intact. There is

no blood, no hole; every hair is in place. I go into this in the manuscript in some detail, as Kurtz seems to have not remembered. This is a rock solid, irrefutable fact.

Each by themselves, autopsy photographs and Z337, establishes a conspiracy killed JFK. Z337 proves beyond question that no shot struck the rear of his head. The shot struck from the front. This is definitive.

Further, for the record, Willis and his wife and one of his daughters also informed private investigators in about 1966 that a shot came from the front. Federal officials carefully orchestrated Willis' testimony to exclude during the questioning of him (and his daughter) anything relating to his belief and witness to a frontal shot. They did not call his wife to testify, although she was one of the best-positioned and solid witnesses to the assassination. Why did not Kurtz refer to this affirmation of my textual points in making his adamant assertion of confutation?

3. Critical points on the reliability of Willis.

I would now add two additional points to substantiate the reliability of Willis' testimony on slide #5. The first I have brief mentioned above.

A. I have shown that Willis' erroneous belief that the limousine stopped, but which was real to him, and that the back of JFK's head was blown out, is perfectly explainable from the nature of the assassination events. They also occurred after #5. The two items do not reflect on his reliable as a witness to the snapping of his camera.

B. But more importantly, Kurtz falsely characterizes the reality of the Willis issue. The time that Willis snapped his shutter is established without question if his words or testimony is not used! If Kurtz does not know this it raises a profound question of the extent of his assassination knowledge.

The photographs, Zapruder film and Willis #5, prove the shot occurred at or just prior to z190, definitive to establish the shooting was beyond the capacity of the alleged Oswald assassin and requires another shooter and that another rifle and that a conspiracy. This stands independent of Willis' testimony. You do not need Willis' testimony; with the Zapruder film sprocket matter you can watch him snap the slide, then walk away. In the slide you can orient him to Zapruder. This was spelled out in my text and is general knowledge to assassination experts.

4. Conclusion.

Willis is reliable; Kurtz' observations were unfair, irrelevant, and invented.