

SECRETS OF A HOMICIDE DALE MYERS' DECEPTION IN 3D

by
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There is a saying among computer people, "Garbage in, garbage out." When Management is involved, it's "Garbage in, gospel out." An excellent demonstration of this appeared in the November, 1994 issue of The Video Toaster User, which features Dale Myers' eight-page advertisement for his computer-generated 3D recreation of the Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination, "Secrets of a Homicide." This isn't ordinary garbage, it's toxic waste.

The editor's note sets you up to expect surprising revelations:

"In the summer of 1975, radio announcer Dale Myers had an opportunity to see a bootleg copy of the Zapruder film...that moment changed his views on the murder of the 36th President...Over the next 20 years, Myers searched the indices of the National Archives...prowled the corridors of the Texas State Archives...[and was] instrumental in the release of nearly 5,000 documents...served as technical consultant...of the critically acclaimed 1993 BBC/Frontline television special 'Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?' Now an award-winning computer animator, Myers explores the JFK assassination in a new documentary."

Rather than revealing secrets, what this video does is create secrets. To fully appreciate this achievement, you need to take a good look at his methods:

SELECTING FRAMES

"...I matched the motion of my 3D scale model to a 2D film of the actual event. This was accomplished by superimposing selected frames from the Zapruder film over a matching view of the 3D computer world. Key frames were then created...(emphasis mine)

"...With the limousine moving down Elm Street at the proper speed, I began 'keying' the motion of the JFK and JBC models to the film...Key frames were then periodically created for both men as the film progressed. Because of the computer's ability to interpolate motion

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between two fixed positions, it was not necessary to create a key at every Zapruder frame. However, to ensure that the motion seen in this 3D version was faithful to the original, key frames were established for every major change in the occupants' motion. In most cases, keys appear every 20 frames, though extreme motion areas required key frames at three to five frame intervals in order to keep the computer recreation locked to the Zapruder film."

Three to five frame intervals? Why leave out a single frame during the critical periods? Why substitute guesswork—even scientific guesswork, which it isn't—when you have actual photographic evidence? Did Myers miss anything?

"The House Select Committee on Assassinations interpreted the blurry images between Z-189 and Z-197 as an indication that JFK had been shot...It appeared...the JFK's right hand 'froze' at this point. However, the computer re-creation reveals something else—a sharp, abrupt continuation of JFK's turn to his right...it is clear that the President was tracking the women at curbside. Perhaps someone called out at the last moment. The President turned further right, but was too far past their position. He spun left (Z-195 to Z-204) and resumed his forward-facing posture..."

At Z-193, the fingers of Kennedy's right hand are extended in a wave. At Z-194, his hand seems to stiffen and his shoulders look hunched. Mrs. Kennedy, whose face is obscured, seems to be looking at her husband, judging from the angle of her hat.

"Still frames clearly show the President grimacing as he emerges behind the sign. The question remaining is how much earlier was he hit and whether Connally shows a reaction to being hit at the same time. Watching the Z-Film in motion hoping to catch this subtle clue is an effort in frustration..."

As Myers explained earlier, he keyed in an actual Zapruder frame at three to five frame intervals only during "extreme motion." This means he keyed in at his usual 20-frame interval while looking for a "subtle clue."

"...It takes the human eye approximately five to ten frames to recognize shapes in motion. By the time your eye locks on JFK or JBC, the film has already progressed to Z-230 to Z-235, where both are already reacting. "The 3D computer model...effectively eliminated these technical limitations."

Actually, you can eliminate the "technical limitations" by examining the film one frame at a time. (But if you do that, you will find something wrong with the lone assassin theory.)

"[T]he computer camera followed the action with an ultrasmooth pan, image sampling was nearly doubled from Zapruder's original 18.3 fps to 30 fps, and the obtrusive Stemmons Freeway sign was assigned an 80 percent transparency value. The action behind the sign was interpolated by the computer based on the first and last frames in which JFK and JBC are visible. What happened behind the sign is no longer a mystery."

Definitely ultrasmooth.

GARBAGE IN

Before the sign:

"As Kennedy completes his left turn away from the women at curbside...(Z-204), the limousine passes behind the freeway sign. JFK begins to resume a position he's kept throughout the motorcade...right arm begins to resume a position he's kept throughout the motorcade—right arm on the side of the limousine, left hand up, holding his right fingers across his chest." [p. 43]

At Z-204, 205, and 206, Kennedy's right arm is not on the side of the limousine, and his right fingers are not across his chest. Kennedy's hand is over his mouth, as if he were choking or coughing into it. Mrs. Kennedy continues to stare at him.

After the sign:

"When JFK emerges from behind the sign (Z-224 to Z-225), his arms change from a smooth, gradual downward motion to a radically quick, jerking upward motion."

Since Myers refers to a "change" after JFK emerges, presumably he means the change takes place between Z-224 and Z-225, meaning Kennedy is normal in Z-224, and has not yet reacted to the shot which Myers claims below comes in at Z-223. In fact, Kennedy's left fist is at his throat at Z-224.

GARBAGE OUT

According to Myers, the computer interpolated what Kennedy was doing just before (girl-watching) and just after he disappeared behind the sign (either reacting or not reacting, depending on how you interpret Z-224). What does Kennedy's reaction at Z-225 have to do with girl-watching? Where is the interpolation? There was none. Instead, the computer produced recycled garbage that has nothing to do with what went into it. Get a whiff:

"As Connally emerges from behind the sign (Z-223),

the computer captures the moment of impact... Without the sign to impede our vision, we see both men literally "jump" at the same time. In 1992, Failure Analysis Associates, Inc. revived a nearly 20-year-old observation that JBC's lapel flap bulges out for one-eighteenth of a second at Z-224, concluding that a bullet struck and passed through the governor's chest at Z-223 to Z-224. This fact, combined with the motions seen in the 3D computer re-creation, would seem to confirm a hit to the governor's chest at Z-223."

The reaction visible in Z-224 merely indicates a bullet struck sometime earlier. We do not see a normal-appearing Kennedy at Z-222 or Z-223. Myers has no logical basis whatsoever for asserting Kennedy was hit at Z-223 and not before, because no frame shows Kennedy not reacting after he emerges from behind the sign. In fact, we don't see him at all, and neither does Myers, not with all the equipment in the world. Kennedy's visibility was zero for a second (one second = 30 frames on Myers' recreation) while he was behind the sign, and 30 times zero is zero.

BENDING SPACE

When John Lattimer ever showed the lateral trajectory from overhead, he always kept the Depository building out of the picture, simply because he couldn't line up the sixth floor window with the wounds of both men. The location of the building makes the trajectory much more sideways than is convenient. Dale Myers has another way of handling the problem: Move the car sideways. At Z-224/5, the car was in the middle of the middle lane, as proven by the film. But Myers places you, the viewer, right in the middle of the lane, with the car to your right, halfway into the left lane, with the car's nose even further left.

DEFECTIVE SELECTIVE LOGIC

If you liked Myers' ability to observe, you'll love his ability to reason.

"[t]he president's body travels straight back toward the backseat cushion, not to the left, as a shot from the grassy knoll would dictate given its location nearly 90 degrees perpendicular to JFK's head..."

Kennedy did move leftward, not just backward, and few critics claim the source was 90 degrees to the right, but that's not the problem. If, according to Myers, a shot from the grassy knoll on the right would "dictate" movement to the left, then what would "dictate" movement straight back? A shot from the front.

Myers not only agrees unwittingly with those who place the source of the shot somewhere in front of the limousine, he also forgets the alleged "jet effect." Otherwise, he would be claiming a shot from the grassy knoll would cause Kennedy's body to travel toward the knoll.

Myers reports the House Select Committee found that a line created by the entrance and exit wounds on Kennedy's skull traced back to a location 15 feet above the sixth floor window sill. By his own calculations, the point of origin was 60 feet too high. His partial explanation for these faulty results:

"[T]he bullet changed course before exiting the skull which, by definition, would eliminate the ability to calculate any true trajectory based on the inshoot and outshoot wounds to the President's skull."

Soon after, he contradicts himself by using the exit wound to calculate the origin of the shot:

"[A] cone representing a shot entering any portion of the displaced skull and exiting the lower right rear...virtually eliminates a shot at Z-313 from any location to the right of the midline of the limousine. Such a shot would have to come from the south plaza knoll, not the north plaza..." [emphasis mine]

If the bullet changes course before exiting the skull as he claims earlier, how can he say the bullet could not come from the right of the limousine? (He also ignores the researchers and witnesses who say a shot came from the south plaza.) In the following statement, he again uses the appearance of the exit wound to calculate the source of the shot:

"Entertaining the hypothetical, I calculated a line from the sniper's nest window to the President's head at Z-312 and then extended that line forward. This line exits the top-right-rear of JFK's skull—within the area blown out upon impact. Although this should not be construed as a true headshot trajectory, it does demonstrate that the damage to JFK's skull is consistent with a shot from the Texas School Book Depository."

The "top-right-rear?" A bullet from behind that exits from behind? That certainly explains everything.