

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. Conrad

DATE: 2/26/64

FROM : W. D. Griffith

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY  
REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION

At the request of The President's Commission Inspector James Inspector Leo Gauthier and Special Agent Lyndal L. Shaneyfelt met with representatives of The Commission on 2/25/64 to further review the films assassination made by Zapruder, Nix and Muchmore. The Muchmore film obtained from the United Press International (UPI) and had not been seen by Commission. In addition, Mr. Herbert G. Orth, Assistant Chief of Life Magazine Photographic Laboratory, was present to show the original of the Zapruder film that had not previously been available.

These films were reviewed in an effort to pinpoint as nearly as possible the exact location of the President's car at the time of each of the shots and to establish, if possible, the time intervals between the shots. It not clear what purpose this will serve in The Commission's investigation of assassination but since The Commission has requested Bureau assistance in film review we are cooperating.

Although the original Zapruder film contains better detail than the copies previously examined, no new evidence was developed as a result of the film review. The original film did give an opportunity to better observe the position of Governor Connally and there is a possibility that a frame by frame study of this portion of the film in conjunction with the medical report showing the path of the bullets may help to establish the approximate point in the film which Governor Connally was shot. Because of the possibility of damage to original film a frame by frame study could not be made. Mr. Orth of Life Magazine offered to make and provide 35 mm color slides of all pertinent frames for this study and furnish them to an Agent of the New York Office of the FBI transmittal to the Laboratory. When these films are received they will be examined in the Laboratory and then made available to The Commission.

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Mohr
- 1 - Mr. Rosen
- 1 - Mr. Malley
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. Lenihan
- 1 - Mr. Gauthier

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SOVIET SECTION

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10/27/88

Dear Jim,

I am disturbed by Zapruder's effort to extend the copyright law in his offer to settle and I will not do this.

Without thereby recognizing that he has a legal copyright on the JFK assassination film I will treat it as though he did, with the assurance that I will not make or permit to be made any commercial use of it.

Absent some provision of law of which you can inform me, because I am familiar with book copyrights I will treat the film as a copyrighted book.

He and his counsel appear not to understand scholarship from these new demands, which include that I may not show any part of the film in any form to other scholars in the field or were I to lecture or conduct a seminar in the local college, which I have done to small audiences. The seminars are with students in a course in political assassinations. They have used my other records and film without any problems at all in their studies and I see no reason consistent with their own compliance with the copyright laws for them to demand that I deny access to these college students.

I regard their efforts to get me to agree to what is not required by the laws as an effort to continue to suppress this essential part of our history and there is no way I will agree to this.

I have used this film fairly and without commercial taint for 24 years without a complaint from them, including the father, who was aware of it, or from Time., Inc., which was aware of it ~~for~~ at least 22 years. Without reasonable question my uses have been exclusively scholarly.

Please give them to understand that without some compelling contrary opinion from you I will adhere to this position.

Harold Weisberg



I will agree to a copyright notice being affixed to each frame but without any extension of copyright being included in the language but I am not in a position to do this myself, as you know.

To Charles Kuhn via Jerry McKnight from Harold Weisberg 10/28/88

re slides of the Zapruder film of the JFK assassination.

If you saw the recent story in the local papers reporting that a Maryland/College Park graduate student and I had filed suit against the Zapruders for access to the film, this was almost the only correct statement in that story. The headline in particular was quite wrong.

Well, we won the suit today, in an out-of-court settlement about which I write you.

Gerard Alexander (Chip) Selby spent three years preparing his thesis in the form of a documentary. He was stonewalled by Henry Zapruder, son of the deceased Abraham who took the motion pictures, for several years. Selby obtained a bootleg copy and used it. He has just won a prestigious award with it, in competition with professional documentary-makers, the "Golden Eagle" award of CINE, a professional ~~group~~ group about which I don't know much, and as a result his documentary on the JFK assassination will be shown around the world in various film and video competitions as representing the United States. He sued because he has an offer for his documentary from several cable TV channels and can't make a deal without either the right to use the film or facing suit over using it without that right.

I filed because Zapruder has been stonewalling me since 1982, when I was to have gotten copies in my FOIA lawsuit, C.A. 78-0322. He'd agreed and then stonewalled.

I wanted and now will be getting slides made from the original, which has about 20% exposed film that is not seen on copying or projection, the material between the left margin and the sprocket holes by which the film is moved, and between these holes. It happens that in at least one area this unseen film is quite significant.

In time you will be getting these 2x2 slides that will be made for me. I have therefore asked for an extra copy of the settlement and its terms for you and will be providing it for your understanding and protection. I will file my copy in the file on this lawsuit, one of the shortest on record, I presume.

Much of the language has no relationship to me and some is self-serving lawyer's language. What it amounts to is that I will make no commercial use of the film, will not give copies to others and will not publish it. There is a special proviso that I will give it to Hood, with the understanding that it abides by this agreement. It is stated that the film can and will be used for scholarly purposes and in this sense, other than in providing copies or publishing, there is no restriction or limit.

Separately I have several unauthorized prints, 8mm and 16mm, and these are not within the agreement. They have been shown at Hood several times. I think you have the best of these on videotape and that it not within the agreement, which is limited to the slides that will be made for me.

There is an odd provision insisted upon by Zapruder's lawyer that makes me and the lawyer who handled this suit for Selby and me wonder whether Time, which originally bought the rights from the Zapruders and returned them, may be planning to sue them.

The only version clearer than these slides is the original.

Until transfer to you students can use them here or probably at Hood, I'll have to find out about this. I think making independent studies of them may be worthwhile for some students. (I did this years ago at the Archives.)

A copy of all filings in the litigation is to be sent to Jerry.