

1/3/69

To Andrew Sciambra
From Harold Weisberg
Prospective witnesses- the Phil Willises

I recommend both Willises be called, especially the wife. Phil told me that not until reading my first two books did he understand why his wife was not called by a witness. In WHITEWASH II I brought to light that there were two head shots. She was very close to the car at this point, abreast it on the south side of Elm (the testimony shows that in calling the kid Liebel called "the wrong one"). Now she saw the head go very hard backward! So, she was not called as a witness. Now if you read the Willis passages of PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH, you will also see that the Secret Service kept his pictures a very long time, didn't return them until he complained, that the FBI kept a very close watch on him and his pictures, did not report them to the Commission until he copyrighted them and they were about to become public. His fifth shot proves the President had been shot before Frame 202, as I explain in WW II. More, it shows a man on the grassy knoll, behind the fence. Even LIFE had Itek confirm this is a man after I published it (I have the slides), only they claim he was not an assassin. However, there is now no doubt there was a man there, near the corner of the fence, facing the car.

Willis took this shot in reaction to the noise of the rifle, not before it. He also can be used to show the character of the investigation, not only in the above but in that he was never positioned as a witness and as a photographer when he was on the stand but was, in correspondence the government has refused to give me, one way of taking "testimony" and establishing "evidence". He also then worked at Downtown Lincoln Mercury. He can be used to get good testimony, through his pictures, of what was in the easternmost sixth-floor window immediately after the shooting (it is his 12th, as I recall, and shows other than the Commission represents).

But Mrs. Willis should be an excellent surprise witness to show that the shots came from the front, that the government knew she would so testify and therefore didn't call her, making a "mistake" instead and calling the kid. More, these reports were classified, for no reason at all, until I asked their declassification the Spring or Summer of 1966. It was not until June of 1964 that the Willises were interviewed by the FBI. The reports (PW, appendix) and Willis' statement to me (see his letter in the app of PW) leave no doubt about this. Both also can be used to show that the government knew immediately, by the time Air Force 1 was leaving for Washington, that the President was shot from the front. Although Liebel was careful to keep it from his testimony, ~~not that~~ he was not reluctant to tell me that all the film was examined at the processing plant. No one can pay any attention to Zapruder's film without seeing this immediately. He also was saying it, as was Mrs. Willis. A neat package. I think that even if this is not essential to your trial, it is very important to get this as a matter of official court record. Willis is friendly to me because I tried to help him. I arranged for LIFE to take him to New York and see his unpublished pictures and I tried to tell him, when they still had value, a year earlier, to let me examine them so he could know what he was trying to sell. With him and Zapruder, it can easily be established that the first shot was before 210. This alone proves conspiracy. There should be very little problem doing this, for the existing testimony is explicit enough and it can be adduced more clearly than through Liebel's obfuscations and the Commission's misrepresentations.