

[Return to our Home Page](#)

[Return to our Zapruder Film Page](#)

Mantik's Mistakes in Assassination Science

I made some allegations regarding the citations used in Dr. Mantik's Assassination Science "Zapruder tampering" chapter in a public forum. Lisa Pease then publicly asked me to qualify my statements. And I did.

Then, in early July, 1998, I received a reply directly from Dr. Mantik.

Here's the dialogue - posted here with the permission of Drs. Mantik and Fetzer...

SUMMARY

Message 1 - My post explaining errors in Dr. Mantik's work.

Message 2 - Dr. Mantik's reply, acknowledging the errors.

Message 3 - My reply to Dr. Mantik.

Message 4 - Editor Jim Fetzer's reply.

What is Clint's Purpose?

Date: Wed, 08 Jul 1998 09:01:23 -0700
From: Clint Bradford
To: james fetzer
Cc: Dr_Mantik@xxxx.xxx, lpease@netcom.com
Subject: Re: Mantik's Mistakes

As I just wrote Dr. Mantik, I found our dialogue last week extremely healthy and civil. And I would like permission to post your email message to me on my Web site's Zapruder film sub-page.

I would like to post all five (so far) messages: my initial post in an assassination newsgroup, followed by Dr. Mantik's response, my reply to him, your letter to me, then my reply to you.

No edits (other than formatting and minor spelling corrections).

My rationale for requesting to post this dialogue is several-fold (grin). The most important reason is that these five messages show all my site's Visitors that calm, deliberate, serious discussion CAN take place among those desiring the "truth" of what occurred 11/22/63. I believe the posts show we all acted rationally, although we may hold differing views.

Certainly a more pleasant exchange than what I see occur on a daily basis in a couple public Internet newsgroups!

Many thanks for your consideration.

Clint Bradford

Message One of Four

The original allegations of errors...

Subject: Mantik's Mistakes
 From: Clint Bradford
 Date: 1998/06/23
 Newsgroups: alt.conspiracy.jfk

LISA>>...you said "intentionally misrepresents." That is a very serious
 LISA>> accusation, and I expected you would have some substance
 LISA>> with which to back that up.

You're right - no one can delve into Mantik's mind and find out WHY he didn't check his work more closely. Until he, himself, explains to the world whether or not he "intentionally misrepresented" Palamara's work, then neither you nor I can dispute my statement. I will let it stand, and see if he can explain his mis-use of Palamara's work.

CLINT>>...Mantik cites "Warren Commission testimony" from someone who
 CLINT>> NEVER TESTIFIED to the WC...he mis-quotes others...attributes a
 CLINT>> statement to the wrong source...I have problems accepting any of
 CLINT>> his "thesis" when the basic facts are hard for him to absorb
 CLINT>> and recite.

LISA>>...please give us the specifics so people can make corrections.
 LISA>> Throwing out blanket statements helps no one...

I wish you would simply READ Assassination Science, and you would discover these problems for yourself.

1. Mantik quotes Baker and Chaney as stating that the limousine stopped. Unfortunately, though, Baker's statement was heresay - he was only quoting what was told to him by Chaney. It is wrong to cite both as independent witnesses to bolster any argument.

2. Mantik cites Chaney's statement as "Warren Commission testimony." Please tell me where, in your copy of the Warren Commission, you find Chaney's testimony. (Try looking at Mantik's cite of "3H221" for Chaney.)

If a mere mistake on Mantik's part, where's the apology and Errata?

If Mantik, though, is relying on subordinates for research and then claiming authorship without verifying facts, we have a larger problem.

3. See if you truly believe Mantik's use of Officer Brown's WC testimony is a fair representation. Don't use the "had to cut it short due to space constraints" argument. Sure, Brown used the word, "stopped," in describing the limo. But what Mantik DOESN'T offer us is his "retraction" during that SAME session of testimony:

Brown: Actually, the first I noticed the car was when it stopped...
 After it made the turn and when the shots were fired, it stopped.

Ball: Did it come to a complete stop?

Brown: That, I couldn't swear to.

Ball: It appeared to be slowed down some?

Brown: Yes; slowed down.

But don't take my word over Mantik's - look it up yourself.

4. Mantik gives us the impression that Palamara claimed at least 48 witnesses stated that the limo "stopped" right before the fatal head shot(s).

Please read Palamara's article for yourself, and especially his opening remarks regarding his research, to see how Mantik misrepresented Palamara's work.

Anthony Marsh dissected Palamara's work, and comes up with 14 witnesses who stated "stopped" and 19 (I believe) who stated "slowed down" - just FYI.

LISA>>...and adds little to your own credibility, raising instead LISA>> questions of motive.

MY motive? You're not going to label me a "disinformation" agent, are you???

My sole motivation is to let readers realize that just because a person has a PhD after their name, or gets published in a work entitled, "Assassination SCIENCE," that the work is not necessarily scholarly nor scientific.

LISA>>Please clarify.

Check out the four glaring Mantik errors/misinformation above that he offers us. Ask yourself why he hasn't apologized for sloppy reporting, mis-statements, and told us he's fired a couple researchers. Then publicly question HIS motives - not mine for merely pointing out errors in a published work.

- Clint Bradford

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Message Two of Four

Dr. Mantik responds...

Subject: Mantik's Mistakes
Date: Fri, 3 Jul 1998 17:18:12 EDT
From: Dr_Mantik@xxxx.xxx
To: clintbrad4d@earthlink.net

A Response to Clint Bradford: REGARDING MANTIK'S MISTAKES
(Permission obtained to post in writing from Dr. Mantik - CB)
--by David W. Mantik--

3 July 1998

Dear Mr. Bradford:

First let me apologize if I have met you and do not recall you. Tell me, have we met? In any case, would you be good enough to tell me a little about yourself?

For your critique, I here provide an item by item response.

1. You are correct that Marrion L. Baker was quoting Chaney about the limousine stopping (3H266). He also cited several other officers and Roy Truly as seeing this same event. This is useful information, but you are correct that it is second hand. I agree that my list would have been stronger if had I cited an eyewitness. If there is a second edition of our book, I would substitute one (of many possible) from Vince Palamara's paper. This is an easy matter to revise.
2. You are correct that my citation for Chaney (3H221) is in error. I would have done better to cite Mr. Lane (2H45) in response to the question of whether the President's limousine had stopped:

"The statement was made by various witnesses, including Mr. Chaney, a motorcycle policeman, Miss Woodward, who was one of the closest witnesses to the President at the time that he was shot, and others. I haven't documented beyond that, because...[it]... seemed to be so generally conceded by almost everyone, that the automobile came to--almost came to a complete halt after the first shot--did not quite stop, but almost did."

You go on to ask where my apology and errata are for this error. Your question assumes that this had already been pointed out to me (it had not). Is there reason to believe that someone had already brought this to my attention?

Regarding errata, I am sending a copy of this response to our editor, Jim Fetzer, for possible inclusion on his Web site.

You ask whether I relied on subordinates for research and thereafter claimed authorship without verifying facts. The answer is that I used no subordinates for this work, but in Assassination Science (Acknowledgments, p. 341) I credit several colleagues whose contributions to my work were crucial (that includes this quote). In addition, I indicated there my willingness to take personal responsibility for any errors that went undiscovered and I also conceded that they must certainly exist. None of this is any real surprise--it is, unfortunately, our common human lot, much as we all dislike it.

3. You point out that Officer Earle Brown offered a "retraction" to my citation of his initial statement that the limo had stopped and you quote him as subsequently saying that the limo may not actually have stopped, but that it had slowed down. I have no objection to this; in another edition, I would be quite content to include the remainder of his testimony. I would, however, disagree with your describing this as a "retraction"--I would find "modification" somewhat more appropriate. More importantly, however, my own position has never depended on a complete stop; a significant slowing (which was widely reported) is quite enough to disagree (disconcertingly) with the extant version of the Z film.
4. Your comments on my summary of Palamara's article are welcome--and not surprising. Perhaps this, too, should be revised in a second edition. I am sending a copy of this response to Vince to get his own input on how to rephrase this sentence in keeping with the spirit of his article.
5. I agree with your comments about academic credentials. You are quite right to pay more attention to the quality of the argument than the

so-called prestige of the author. That has always been my very strong bias as well. But this cuts two ways: if such a position is honestly held, then there must be no more ad hominem attacks on individuals who judge the Z film to be altered--merely because they have not worked in special effects in Hollywood.

Instead, we must all resolve to focus on the real issues and not let ourselves become distracted by someone's credentials (Mo Weitzman included).

6. Finally, you ask about my motives. My own habit has been to avoid such questions because they are usually distractions and, even worse, they tend to be divisive. Nonetheless, my answer is simple and not mysterious in the least:

I just want to know what happened. When I first began to explore the JFK assassination in 1992, I spent several months in a state of some uncertainty about whether a case could really be made for conspiracy. I had no initial bias, at least not a conscious one. Just so with the Z film: I began with an open mind, but as the evidence for alteration accumulated it began to seem overwhelming, as it still does to me. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that I am willing to recant when the data change--as I once did publicly regarding the authenticity of the X-rays. Later evidence, obtained from Kodak physicists, returned me to a conclusion of alteration. (Recall also that the head of medical physics at Kodak did review my X-ray article as it appears in Assassination Science--and proffered no changes. Do you wish to offer any critiques of it?) In any case, I trust that we can henceforth bypass issues of motive. They are usually dead ends.

Please feel free to forward any more editorial comments to Jim Fetzer, who will pass them to me as needed. Surely there are more items that need to be revised in a second edition of our book--just keep looking! As a personal note, however, none of the critiques heretofore received (from anywhere) have affected my view that the Z film was altered. In fact, I have been quite astonished that so few significant counterpoints have been raised--the superficial responses from the critical community at large have been very disappointing. And John McAdams' assertion that "This whole body of 'work' was torn apart soon after it was presented at the 1996 Lancer conference," is quite irrelevant (besides being false) since much of what appears in my chapter in Assassination Science is new.

With all best wishes,

David W. Mantik

cc: Jim Fetzer, Vince Palamara, Lisa Pease.

Message Three of Four

I reply to Dr. Mantik...

Subject: Re: Mantik's Mistakes
Date: Fri, 03 Jul 1998 17:04:00 -0700
From: Clint Bradford
To: Dr_Mantik@xxxx.xxx

Dr. Mantik,

Thank you very much for your reply to my message posted in the JFK

newsgroups.

Have you asked that Lisa post your reply to the newsgroups that it appeared? Your reply, I feel, should be seen by all those who might have read my original post. Or is this for our personal consumption only?

>>Tell me, have we met?

Not yet...but I see you will be attending the JFK/Lancer conference again this November! I hope to meet you there.

>>In any case, would you be good enough to tell me a little about >>yourself?

I am 41 years old, and the JFK assassination has always intrigued me. I ran a BBS - Bulletin Board System (precursor to the modern Internet) for several years, which focused on my interests: the JFK assassination, Amateur (Ham) Radio, and telecommunications legal issues.

I wish I remembered the EXACT reason I had the occasion to contact Debra Conway in October of 1995...it might have had something to do with my BBS and/or the acquisition of a textfile to post...but before she would let me hang up the phone, I was committed to going to Dallas the next month for her JFK/Lancer Conference of 11/95. Before I called her that afternoon, there was no way I was even THINKING about going to Dallas that year. But there was something in the way she conducted herself ... something about her conviction...that made me immediately make air reservations - and attend the seminars.

She is responsible for a dramatic change in my life - and I will always admire her for it. That was my first trip to Dallas. (I wrote a brief article on that trip, still posted at -

<http://www.pe.net/~atd/dallascb.htm>

I met and talked with Ian Griggs, Hugh Sidey, Mary Ferrell, Ed Hoffmann, Robert Groden, Patsy Paschall, Bobby Hargis, and many others. My first walk-through Dealey Plaza was with Debra the evening I arrived - a truly sobering - and exciting - experience. As I wrote in 1995, Debra was entirely accurate when she advised me of the "first-timer's phenomenon:"

"TO FIRST-TIME VISITORS TO DEALEY PLAZA: You have just acquired a new perspective of the site - which makes an incredible amount of difference when interpreting the data you've gathered and read. You will not sleep a lot - you will be re-reading."

Since the 1995 Conference, I have created a Web site on the JFK assassination at

<http://www.pe.net/~atd>

and offer a couple hundred texts and files relating to the assassination to all.

I missed the 1996 Conference - but attended last November's sessions. I was proud of my informal "alliance" with JFK/Lancer, and took photographs of the event for Debra. I even presented two short LBJ audio tapes clips for the group, and made transparencies of the five handwritten pages of "Fritz Notes" that Tom Samoluk of the ARRB brought to the seminar to show to all.

I purchased a copy of ASSASSINATION SCIENCE at the November JFK/Lancer sessions. I didn't have a chance to get to it while in Dallas, but I

placed it in my carry-on luggage for the flight home. After viewing Groden's THE ASSASSINATION FILMS several times, and seeing the same definite limo slowing right before the final head shot(s), I was interested in what proof researchers had for "alteration" of the Zapruder film.

I feel the "best" copies (detailed...clear...next to the original as the general public can get) are contained on either Lifton's "Research Copy" videotape, and/or Groden's THE ASSASSINATION FILMS video. Groden offers over a dozen "treatments/versions" of the Zapruder film - from the contrasty, virtually worthless Clay Shaw trial-era copy to a copy that Groden claims is extremely close to the original film. Yet in each and every one of them, I see very consistent movements...

So when I began reading Jack White's list of points that "prove" tampering, I almost yelled out, "What is he looking at?" Groden may be a good photo manipulator, but he's not good enough to alter a dozen renditions on his video.

So that's where I'm coming from on this particular issue. I do not believe that Groden is a master manipulator of images, and he offers over a dozen renditions of the Zapruder film that are all consistent with each other. And all these renditions demolish almost all "claims of alteration" included in ASSASSINATION SCIENCE.

>>1. You are correct...Baker was quoting Chaney...it is second hand...
>>...This is an easy matter to revise.

>>2. You are correct that my citation for Chaney (3H221) is in error.
>>..."[it]... seemed to be so generally conceded by almost everyone,
>>that the automobile came to--almost came to a complete halt after
>>the first shot--did not quite stop, but almost did."

I do not see that as bolstering a claim that the limo "stopped," though.

I sincerely believe that we have to dismiss witness' statements of "the limo stopped" - as well as "slowed down" - if they were BEHIND the limo during this sequence. Just leave them out of the "number crunching." Here's why.

Something dramatic is happening. People sense something's wrong. The Presidential limo is moving directly AWAY from them. At a downward angle. And the brake lights come on...

We cannot hold eyewitnesses' testimony to be entirely accurate in that situation - the difference of "slowing" and "stopped" in that situation just might be beyond the depth perception capabilities of humans.

Try looking at vehicles moving down that street away from you and see if you really believe you can differentiate between, say, 10-11 MPH and 5 MPH. It's a tough task. Even if you ARE looking for it with preconceived notions. (grin)

>>You go on to ask where my apology and errata are for this error. Your >>question assumes that this had already been pointed out to me (it had >>not). Is there reason to believe that someone had already brought this >>to my attention?

Sorry. I saw what I thought were obvious errors in basic reporting. I mis-assumed that they had been brought to your attention earlier. I believe Dr. Fetzer has read similar critiques from me - and others - since the book was published.

>>Regarding errata, I am sending a copy of this response to our editor,
>>Jim Fetzer, for possible inclusion on his Web site.

That would be marvelous.

>>3. You point out that Officer Earle Brown offered a "retraction" to my
>>citation of his initial statement that the limo had stopped and you
>>quote him as subsequently saying that the limo may not actually have
>>stopped, but that it had slowed down. I have no objection to this; in
>>another edition, I would be quite content to include the remainder of
>>his testimony. I would, however, disagree with your describing this as >>a
"retraction"--I would find "modification" somewhat more appropriate.

Entirely correct. Semantics - but the bottom line is that a reader of
your chapter might not have the capability to look up citations
themselves. They would read your quotation, and believe that that
witness said, "stopped," and "stopped" only.

>>More importantly, however, my own position has never depended on a
>>complete stop; a significant slowing (which was widely reported) is
>>quite enough to disagree (disconcertingly) with the extant version of
>>the Z film.

This is where we both disagree. I have over a dozen renditions of the
Zapruder film (mentioned above) that all show the exact "significant
slowing" of the Presidential limo.

>>4. Your comments on my summary of Palamara's article are welcome--and
>>not surprising. Perhaps this, too, should be revised in a second
>>edition. I am sending a copy of this response to Vince to get his own
>>input on how to rephrase this sentence in keeping with the spirit of >>his
article.

I met Vince briefly last November. I am sure he would welcome an
invitation to clarify this.

>>5. I agree with your comments about academic credentials.

Since I have not met you, please know that this was not intended to
"slur" you, personally. I simply feel very frustrated seeing a book
with the word, "science," in its title - but with chapters including
mis-quotations, partial quotations, lack of basic research...

There's a chapter in ASSASSINATION SCIENCE written by a gentleman who
swears to this day that Greer killed the President. Roy Schaeffer cannot
even identify the heritage of HIS copy of the Zapruder film: "It just
showed up in my mailbox one day..." he told me in a telephone
conversation. From what he told me, his must be a Clay Shaw trial-era
copy - which is so contrasty as to be worthless, when compared to what
we have available today. All that aside, his chapter on the limo's blink
rate fails to offer the most basic of facts: how did you arrive at
the manufacturer's blink rate? How do you know what it was supposed to
be? Schaeffer doesn't offer answers to these questions - he does not
know the answers.

>>6. Finally, you ask about my motives...

Again, I apologize for any personal/professional slur - that was not my
point. My point was to make readers look at citations themselves, and do
a little digging themselves. I am not a paranoid person, but I think
we'd all be better off if we questioned authority a little more often.

>>...I just want to know what happened...I trust that we can henceforth

>>bypass issues of motive. They are usually dead ends.

Agreed.

>>Please feel free to forward any more editorial comments to Jim
>>Fetzer..

Jim wrote me earlier this year, when I stated that I was befuddled at what was published in his book, and that I was intending to publish an article refuting several claims in it. If I remember correctly, he desired a "first look" at anything I had to publish (a ridiculous request - I would write to individual authors involved for comments/input, though).

>>Surely there are more items that need to be revised in a second >>edition of our book--just keep looking!

I do not believe that Dr. Fetzer, yourself, nor I would desire an "Open Forum" type of "Errata Page" on Fetzer's site for all-comers to post anything they desire. But I welcome the "avenue" to get items for an Errata sheet via Dr. Fetzer. I hope he takes you up on the suggestion, and offers regular, substantiated Updates to it.

>>As a personal note, however, none of the critiques heretofore received >>(from anywhere) have affected my view that the Z film was altered...

And healthy, honest debate should be welcomed. I was surprised as anyone when I - as NEW to this topic as I am - was able to find "problems" with some authors' recently published writings.

Again, I sincerely thank you for your reply. I hope to meet you at the JFK/Lancer November in Dallas 1998 conference.

- Clint Bradford
5085 Trail Canyon Drive
Mira Loma CA 91752-1685
909-681-6210 - Office
909-681-6222 - Fax

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Message Four of Four

Editor Jim Fetzer replies...

Clint,

Please know that I do intend to make some corrections in response to the points you have raised, but I have not had a chance to work them out with David yet...

Thanks. I will certainly do something to "clean this up" in the fourth printing of the book. And if you notice other errors - large or small - do let me know. Something of this sort must be a collaborative effort.

It was too late to make the third printing, however, and I therefore expect to incorporate this in the fourth printing.

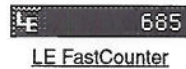
In a work of [Assassination Science's] complexity dealing with events of this magnitude, there will (almost invariably) be some errata. I have no objections to your bringing these things up - in fact, I appreciate it greatly - but the vast majority of work that is included in the book is of a very high standard and the mistakes appear to be relatively minor.

Let us work together and advance the cause of justice for our dead President.

Jim
James H. Fetzer
Editor
ASSASSINATION SCIENCE

Email: Clint Bradford

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