

copy to LIFE 1964

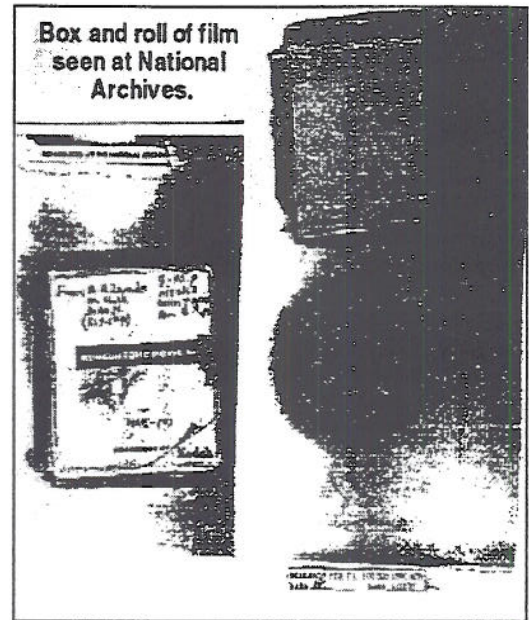
ZAPRUDER FILM: VERSION OR VIRGIN FILM

By Anna Marie Kuhns-Walko

Many individuals have seen the latest frenzy in the news concerning the buying and selling of the infamous Zapruder film taken on November 22, 1963 by Abraham Zapruder. The battle still continues on the price that the United States government may pay to the family for the possession of the film. The family allegedly wants 18.5 million dollars for compensation whereas the Department of Justice has allegedly offered between 750,000 - 3 million dollars, that debates is still being played out. The controversy of the on-going debate concerning the rightful possession of the film was changed last year and declared as the property of the people of the United States by way of the Assassination Review Board.

However there is a new video out concerning this film. The film video is called "Image of An Assassination: A New Look at the Zapruder Film, by MPI. I have reviewed this video and it is definitely a plus for the research and historical community even though there is a high probability that the film used in it is not the original. This article concerns both the video and whether the so-called original film is in fact the virgin original and not just another version.

Over the past 34+ years this film has been shown in numerous films, documentaries, news casts, magazines, and books. There is still the question of the authenticity of the Zapruder film WHY? The most obvious reason being the mix-up of frames, chain of evidence, and the many different copies. Have we been told the truth concerning this film all these years? I believe time has proven that we have not seen or heard the full



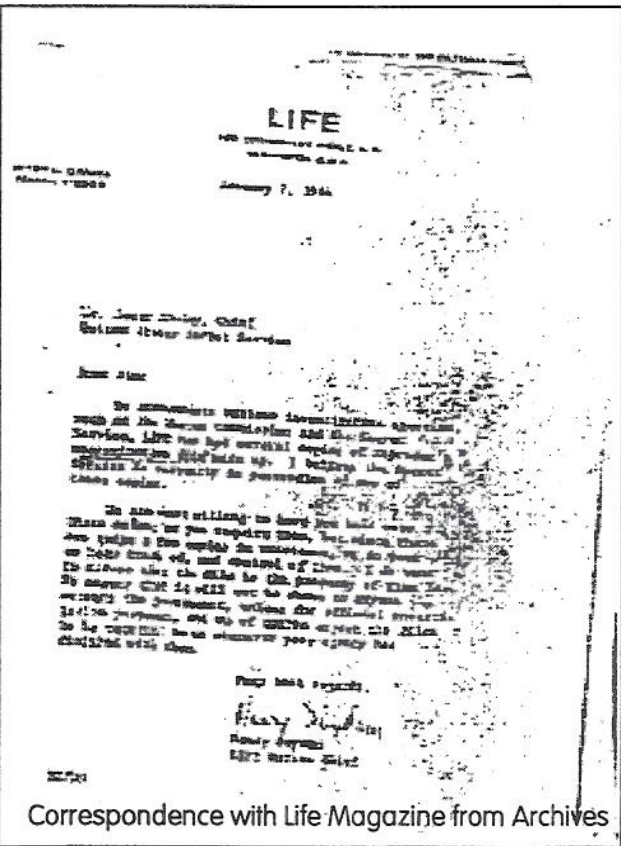
To the Secret Service:

"To accommodate various investigative agencies, such as the Warren Commission and the Secret Service, LIFE has had several copies of Zapruder's assassination film made up. I believe the Secret Service is currently in possession of two of these copies.

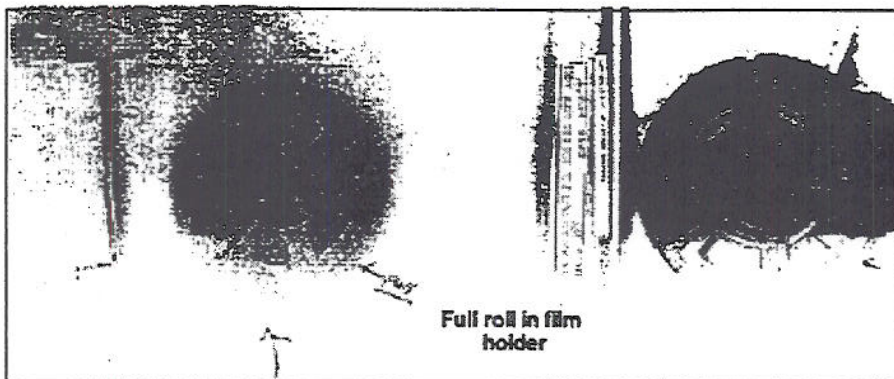
We are most willing to have you hold onto these as long as you require them, but since there are quite a few copies in existence, we do want to keep track of, and control them. I do want to state that the film is the property of Time Inc. We ask that it will not be shown to anyone outside the government, unless for official investigative purposes, and we of course expect the film[s] to be returned to us whenever your agency has finished with them."

January 7, 1964

Harry Snyder, LIFE Bureau Chief



Correspondence with Life Magazine from Archives



story concerning this film. I have followed the chain of evidence, the testimony of Abraham Zapruder, and viewed the many different copies of the film within my research on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. I am going to discuss some of the materials that I personally found.

Abraham Zapruder became a part of the most tragic event in history, just by being in Dealey Plaza and filming the motorcade of the president, inadvertently filming the actual assassination of the president along with many others that day.

Understandably shocked, distraught, and dazed from this trauma he arrived back at his place of business within the Dal-Tex building. He then went to have his film developed with a member of the United States Secret Service (USSS) Forrest Sorrels, Zapruder's partner Erwin Schwartz. After arriving at the Eastman Kodak Processing Lab there was another individual already there to have his film developed, his name was Phil Willis. In all the years that Phil Willis attended the many JFK conferences, I do not recall him stating he was there while the films were being developed (both Willis' and Zapruder's) and that they viewed both of them. This was mentioned by Erwin Schwatz within the new video concerning the film. There is in fact documentation that proves this to be in fact true. (DL100-10461-5965) Within this document Phil Willis states they were there between 2:00-2:30pm and observed Air Force One taking off from Love Field while the films were being developed since the lab was very close.

Sorrels took both the Willis' and the Zapruder's films. There was a Mr. Phillips from the USSS that took possession of the film at 9:25pm on 11/22/63, as this information was written on the box of the film. (USSS C02-34040) The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) received their copy from the USSS on 11/23/63 via Special Agent F.F. John. (89-43-1A271) How many different agencies and people had access or copies to this film: We have Kodak Lab, Jamison Films, USSS, FBI, LIFE, Warren Commission (WC), Central Intelligence (CIA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Garrison, Los Alamos (LASL), House Select Committee (HSCA), National Archives (NARA), owners, not to mention the many different boot-leg copies of the Zapruder film.

Zapruder in his WC testimony on 7/22/64 did not completely state that the film and frames that he was shown was his, what he states is *if the prints came from his film then it was his.* (emphasis my own) This is the same type of wording that was used in the verifying of the autopsy X-rays and photos. He stated that he received \$25,000 when he received \$150,000 if not more. He also stated that he did not keep a copy of the film. The chain of possession is completely lost due to the different handling and copies being made.

We know that it was sold and stored by *LIFE*.

According to Henry Snyder of Life magazine on 1/7/64 there were several copies made for the USSS and the WC and goes on to state their film would not be shown outside of the government unless for official investigation purposes. (C02-34030)

LIFE magazine then returns the film back to the Zapruder family

in 1975 and then is transferred back to the NARA. During the HSCA they had analysis done of the film by both NASA and LASL. One document states:

"... It might be advantageous or helpful to borrow one of the USSS's dupes made from the uncut original - OR the black and white 16mm 'virgin' unslit black and white film that was shown to the joint session on March 11th to see just what is missing in the spliced parts on what's left of the original Zapruder film." (HSCA 180-10075-10377 NF 006568)

In another document from LASL for the HSCA states:

"...In enumerating and labeling the scanned frames we have counted the missing frames as if they were there. It was understanding from Daly that we would then be in accord with the 'standard' scheme." (HSCA 180-10075-10379 NF 006570)

Still another document which has this interesting statement:

"...I am certain you will agree that this delay beyond the end of the Committee's life is warranted when you understand our reason. If we were to prepare the archival tapes now, we could only make copies of the existing original tapes. There are nearly forty of these tapes. The organization of these tapes is poor, due to the inadvertent skipping of one group of frames. You will, I am sure, have a vivid recollection of that problem. The LASL Computer Science Division is now preparing codes with which we can easily piece the missing frames in at the right position and can easily compact the data into a more modern format. As a result of the compaction, the forty tapes shrink to no more than five tapes...." (HSCA 180-10116-10374 NMP)

A HSCA document states that President John F. Kennedy was reacting to a shot just before he disappears behind the road sign. Two shots were fired before Kennedy's head disappears behind the roadway sign, one shot did not hit him, the second shot did hit him before he disappears behind the sign. Hence he clutches his throat with his hands and is still doing this as he emerges from behind the roadway sign. Both Jackie and Connally are faced toward him because of the reaction to the sounds of the shot. (HSCA 180-10114-10426 NMP 014709) I mention this for two reasons; 1) the importance of JFK being shot before the sign -- not during the end of the sign which they saw on the virgin film, and 2) due to the fact that this is one of the many things that I saw when I viewed a very special film in Washington.

On June 12, 1994 while I was at the National Archives going through documents they released some new batches of files, some of these files being from FBI Field Office Files. After the initial public viewing by reporters that day I requested one of these boxes. This proved highly important in many ways as I believed it would be from viewing them with the reporters. Within this one box was a film box that was dated 11/22/63, there was a reel of film within the box. (FBI 89-43-1A81) The film completely filled the reel to the extreme end. Upon looking at the film I gasped as having held and seen the many different versions of the Zapruder film it was immediately apparent that this was the Zapruder film. It was crystal clear, color, no blurs, no graininess. I also noticed the frailty of the film especially at the crucial areas where the shots were fired. I informed the JFK Task Force of this and they removed it for preservation to take care of it. I asked to have a

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copy made when it was preserved but still have not obtain one by the time that I left Washington seven months later.

Just before leaving I asked for the box containing it and the other information. I was told there was no such item, that nothing like that has been released, after three times I finally stated that I had proof that it was in fact there and released because I had zeroxed the reel and the documentation before turning it back to them. (This was done after I asked permission at the desk and received it. I did this as a safe guard since other documents disappeared after my reviewing them. I was not going to let it happen a second time) After a brief time the representative came back and said it was still not back from preservation. I returned to Washington in 1995 to obtain other documents and I decided to check on the status of this film, again I was not given it. I saw Steve Tilley in the room and I asked him about the film after refreshing his memory. He state that they did not have the staff to do it and that he agreed that it was the clearest he had seen probably better

than the one they had as the original. So a year after seeing it and turning it back over for fear of breakage it has stayed out of our reach but can be proven it was there by the copies that I made. Nothing will make me change my opinion of the importance of this film and that it was the VIRGIN film. I saw it and I held it.

Before the JFK Act of 1992 it appears that the Zapruder family representative had contact with the presidential libraries and the National Archives concerning the rules and handling of this film. This was done on 3/6/91, 5/14/92, 8/4/92, and 10/15/92. I find this most interesting since it was before we had it signed by President George Bush. (NARA 189-100001-10002, & NARA 189-10001-10012)

I have shown that there were many hands that crossed over the Zapruder film over the years and it understandable when individuals doubt the validity of the Zapruder film. The video that has recently been released is almost perfect but not quite. The virgin film is real folks along with the many different versions of the film, we need to make sure that the correct one is the one that is released when it comes down to the exchange of cash for it. Which one would you want? Virgin or Version?

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Zapruder's Tragic View: New Details of JFK Assassination in Enhancement of Spectator's Film

by Mary K. Feeny
Hartford Courant

July 1, 1998

On Monday, the questions start all over again. When the much-publicized video of the Zapruder Film becomes available for the first time in retail stores, you can expect discussions about the assassination of President Kennedy to surface on TV talk shows and in dinner-table conversation.

The video program featuring Abraham Zapruder's original 26-second home movie, which has been digitally enhanced frame by frame, includes material not seen before because it was contained between the original film's sprocket holes.

The video's slow-motion closeups are shocking, particularly those beginning with frame 313: a shot explodes in a bloody cloud, and fragments of the president's head fall backward.

For those who scoff at the Warren Commission's report, who think gunshots could not all have come from behind Kennedy, this visual evidence, now widely available, raises powerful questions.

"This is going to reinforce, for probably 9 out of 10 people, that John F. Kennedy was hit in the head from the front. And if so, two shooters. And two shooters means conspiracy," says George Michael Evica, a University of Hartford professor emeritus, author and senior editor of a journal called [the Kennedy] Assassination Chronicles.



The MPI Home Video documentary, titled *Image of an Assassination: A New Look at the Zapruder Film* shows the painstaking steps in renewing the 1968 footage. The 45-minute video, retailing for \$19.95, is being released to satisfy numerous requests for research, educational and personal use. "balancing, as we have throughout the years, the public interest is access with our desire to protect against exploitation of this tragic event," Zapruder's son, Henry G. Zapruder, said in a prepared statement.

But the video release also reveals what most Americans may not know. The original Zapruder film, locked away since 1978 in the National Archives in a storage vault kept at 25 degrees, is not intact. The film has two breaks in it, and, some have argued, perhaps more, from four to 10 of the film's roughly 500 frames are believed missing.

The film was damaged by lab technicians at Life magazine, whose parent company, Time, Inc., bought the rights to the film in 1963. The missing frames were evident as early as 1964, when the Warren Commission report was released.