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## WILLIAM GREER'S IMPOSSIBLE HEAD TURN

by  
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In the September 1994 issue of The Fourth Decade, Richard Burgess wrote an article "On the Authenticity of the Zapruder Film" with the conclusion "I can state categorically that the Zapruder film has not had anything added to it or removed from it, apart from the splices that everyone knows about." [1] To back up this claim, the article focused on how difficult it would be to alter 8mm film due to its "grainy quality" and how registration problems would cause a traveling matte (necessary to darken the back of Kennedy's head or paint in an additional wound) to be easily detected. In a brief response to Burgess' points, the Zapruder film shows no evidence of poor grain quality. The enlargement photos in Groden's book, The Killing of a President, made from a multiple generation copy, are very clear, and the prints I've seen were excellent. Mr. Burgess is correct that precise registration is critical to create an undetectable traveling matte necessary to darken the back of Kennedy's head. Upon close examination of the Zapruder film frames from 302 to 317, the dark shadow on the back of Kennedy's head moves about in a pattern indicative of imprecise registration. Furthermore, while the angle of the sun creates a black shadow on Kennedy's head, corresponding locations of Jackie Kennedy, Governor Connally, and William Greer should also be darkened due to the same angle of the sun but instead are plainly visible. Although many of these observations are subject to one's visual interpretation, Mr. Burgess' article failed to address the most compelling and recent evidence of probable Zapruder film alteration, specifically frames that have been deleted "apart from the splices everyone knows about."

During the November 1993 Symposium on the Kennedy Assassination at Dallas, Texas, two presentations were made concerning the photographic alteration of government evidence. David Mantik, MD., Ph.D., a radiation oncology specialist, who had recently examined the X-rays from President Kennedy's autopsy at the National Archives using an optical densitometer, stated that in his medical opinion the X-rays are composite forgeries. The second revelation was made by author and researcher David Lifton who showed slides of selected Zapruder frames. Mr. Lifton's presentation focused upon a recent discovery made by assassination researcher Noel Twyman concerning the turning of the head of William

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Greer, the driver of Presidential limousine. Mr. Twyman obtained excellent color prints made from the Zapruder film and in studying the frames noticed that in frame 302 William Greer was looking straight forward and one frame later (frame 303) the driver's head had turned approximately 150 degrees and was looking over his right shoulder at Kennedy. Greer held this position through frame 316. Again one frame later (frame 317), Greer is looking straight ahead. The obvious and inescapable conclusion is that at two separate occasions, William Greer had turned his head approximately 150 degrees within one frame. As Zapruder's camera was operating at 18.3 frames per second, [2] Greer made this movement in .056 second. The head turn by Greer in one frame was further mentioned in an article I wrote that appeared in the May 1994 issue of The Fourth Decade. [3] To date no one has responded or addressed the issue raised in this article.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Noel Twyman who made this discovery and viewed his excellent color prints of the Zapruder film. Mr. Twyman for the past three years has been writing a comprehensive book on the Kennedy assassination in which an in-depth analysis of the Zapruder film will be made. He shared with me his time-motion tests using a step-frame video camera of an athletic tennis professional who turned his head as fast as he could in an attempt to duplicate Greer's feat. The results of his tests showed that at least four Zapruder frames would be required for Greer's movement. As a former amateur filmmaker, I was interested in conducting my own independent test of the head turn using Super 8mm film.

To conduct the experiment my twenty-year old son sat in the driver's seat of an open convertible and looked over his right shoulder to simulate William Greer's position in frame 316. We then conducted multiple tests filming him turning his head as fast as he could to the front to simulate Greer's position at frame 317. My son is very athletic and had progressed up to a green belt in karate at the time of the test. I can categorically state that the 54 year old Greer, who displayed very slow reactions when he drove down Elm Street, could not have turned his head any faster than my son. The Super 8mm camera was set to eighteen frames per second to coincide with the camera speed of Abraham Zapruder's.

When the film was developed, I first viewed the footage through the projector to insure the quality and reliability of the film. Next the film was studied through the editor where individual frames were studied. The results of the experiment conclusively proved that the fastest my twenty year old could turn his head in duplicating the movement of William Greer

was four of the 8mm movie frames or .22 of a second. Many of the turns were completed in five frames. Photographs were made of the various frames and the film was also transferred to video.

I would encourage and challenge researchers who do not believe frames have been deleted from the original Zapruder film to conduct your own experiment. You don't need to be a physicist or a photographic expert to verify this for yourself. There are many Super 8 cameras still out there. Borrow one from a friend who is over forty years of age. Super 8mm film is still available, although it may have to be ordered from Kodak in a ten roll minimum. I was fortunate to have a couple of rolls (cartridges) of film in the refrigerator and although they had an expiration date of 1984 they came out beautifully. My local camera store had the film developed at an outside film processing laboratory so you may have to shop around. The tests can also be made with a video camera with step frame playback. Sony video cameras playback at 1/30 (.033) second

per frame, so the equivalent number of Zapruder frames can be calculated by multiplying the number of frames by .033 divided by .056.

I would appreciate receiving correspondence from any researcher on the results of their experiment. If it is impossible for the turn of Greer's head to be made within one frame (with a camera operating at eighteen frames per second), how does Mr. Burgess explain what is plainly visible at Zapruder frame 302/303 and 316/317?

#### Notes

1. Richard W. Burgess, "On the Authenticity of the Zapruder Film," *The Fourth Decade*, September 1994, pp. 5-7.
2. Hearings before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Vol. 5, p. 160.
3. Chuck Marler, "Questioning the Limousine's Speed on Elm Street," *The Fourth Decade*, May 1994, pp. 19-22.

## THE DANGER OF RELIANCE ON "AUTHORITY" IN THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

by

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The following comments are prompted by reading an article in the September issue of *The Fourth Decade* titled "On the Authenticity of the Zapruder Film" by Richard Burgess. Usually when I take issue with any Decade article, I correspond directly with the author about my concerns, and the resulting correspondence often is enlightening for both parties. Some authors are even nice enough to send me advance copies of articles.

But in the case of Mr. Burgess' article, I doubt that a personal letter would be fruitful, nor would it inform readers of the quality of his "expertise" regarding possible tampering with the Z-film. I do not know Mr. Burgess and I certainly do not wish to antagonize him by unduly harsh criticism. I myself am certainly no expert, but I do know enough about a lot of things to know that he is just "blowing smoke" in this essay. I suggest that readers of his article put his "expertise" to the test and judge for themselves whether his arguments hold up. I suggest the following faults and errors with his treatise:

1. Other than listing his University employer, he gives us no

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supporting evidence of his qualifications as an expert.

2. As a self-proclaimed "expert," he asks us to take on faith that he has, to quote him, "personal knowledge of the sorts of processes and effects that were available to film-makers in 1963 and I can state categorically that the Zapruder film has not had anything added or removed from it."

3. His entire thesis attempts to "prove a negative," which most "experts" claim is impossible. Proving something did happen is much easier than proving something did not happen. His claim that the film was not tampered with is not provable, since successful undetected tampering would appear no different than an untampered film.

4. Attacking Harrison Livingstone's claims of Z-film alteration is like setting up a straw man to destroy. Harry has done a huge amount of extremely important work on medical evidence, but he obviously is out of his element in the technical aspects of photography, and his mistakes about photographic techniques and procedures are woefully obvious. Burgess properly attacks some of Harry's weaknesses. But because Harry's technical expertise was faulty does not mean he was wrong in his observations and conclusions. In fact, I myself had observed many of the same things more than 15 years before Harry wrote about them, and have included them in my lectures for years.

5. Burgess exhibits a conspicuous lack of knowledge when he says "Standard 8mm film has an especially small frame size...and is consequently particularly grainy." The Z-film was exposed on Eastman's Kodachrome. It is fact that