



# The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK's Assassination

By David R. Wrone

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It is the most famous home movie of all time, the most closely analyzed 26 seconds of film ever shot, the most disturbing visual record of what many have called ?the crime of the century."

In 486 frames—a mere six feet of celluloid—Abraham Zapruder’s iconic film captures from beginning to end the murder of President John F. Kennedy in broad daylight. An essential piece of evidence, the film has become nearly synonymous with the assassination itself and has generated decades of debate among conspiracy theorists and defenders of the Warren Commission’s official report. Until now, however, no scholar has produced a comprehensive book-length study of the film and its relation to the tragic events of November 22, 1963.

David Wrone, one of our nation’s foremost authorities on the assassination, re-examines Zapruder’s film with a fresh eye and a deep knowledge of the forensic evidence. He traces the film’s history from its creation on the ?grassy knoll? by Dallas dressmaker Zapruder through its initial sale to *Life* magazine and early reproductions and its analysis by the Warren Commission and countless assassination researchers, licensing by the Zapruder family, legal battles over bootleg copies, and sale to the federal government for sixteen million dollars.

Wrone’s major contribution, however, is to demonstrate how a close examination of the film itself necessarily refutes the Warren Commission’s lone-gunner and single-bullet theories. The film, as he reminds us, provides a scientifically precise timeline of events, as well as crucial clues regarding the timing, number, origins, and impact of the shots fired that day. Analyzing the film frame-by-frame in relation to other evidence—including two key photos by Phil Willis and Ike Altgens—he builds a convincing case against the official findings.

Without fanfare, he concludes that more than three gunshots were fired from more than one direction and that most likely none were fired by alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. If true, then JFK’s death was the result of a conspiracy, for the Commission’s nonconspiracy conclusion requires a maximum of three shots and one gunman.

Wrone, however, does not speculate as to who actually shot JFK or why—or even if Oswald was a part of the conspiracy. In fact, he is no fan of conspiracy-theorists and is just as critical of the legion of conspiracy theorists as he is of the Warren Commission (which, he reveals, crushed dissent within its own ranks).

Doggedly pursuing the evidence wherever it leads, Wrone has produced a meticulous, clear-eyed, and provocative new reading of this remarkable cinematic Rosetta Stone.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The famous Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination lasts a grand total of 26 seconds. In this 400-page book, Wrone (professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point) dissects Zapruder's footage frame by frame, only to end up restating at length the well-worn argument, expressed much more succinctly in scores of other publications, that the film shows shots fired from three different angles, none of them correlating with Lee Harvey Oswald's perch at the Texas Book Depository. While Wrone's exhaustive consideration of the film itself quickly becomes tedious, he provides a few chapters that tell some intriguing stories, such as Zapruder's early actions in the initial hours after the assassination (when he first realized he possessed a valuable "property"), the several subsequent court fights over ownership in various sections of the film and the tangled history of the U.S. government's acquisition, decades after the event, of the film. Wrone also chronicles the various ways in which the film has been used and abused by both adherents and critics of the Warren Commission and summarizes the theory, advanced by the commission's more crackpot critics, that Zapruder's footage has been altered in order to eliminate the most damning evidence of conspiracy. Aside from these anecdotes, however, there is nothing new here, just reiteration of the scathing criticisms of the Warren Commission's conclusions. Wrone's book will appeal to only the most die-hard and detail-driven assassination buffs, though these findings by a sober historian may draw attention as we mark the 40th anniversary of the assassination. 40 photos, 22 in color.

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### Review

?An important, valuable, and compelling addition to the literature on the assassination that argues convincingly that the film is both authentic and contains evidence of a conspiracy.?—**Michael L. Kurtz**, author of *The JFK Assassination Debates: Lone Gunman versus Conspiracy*?Wrone's knowledge of the assassination's complex and daunting evidentiary base is unparalleled.?—**James H. Lesar**, founder and president of the Assassination Archives and Research Center ?The vivid images captured by the Zapruder film are eminently recognizable, perhaps more so than any other film footage ever captured, so much so that anyone who reflects on JFK's assassination quite likely does so from Abraham Zapruder's vantage point.?—**Walter E. Dellinger III**, Maggs Professor of Law at Duke University and former Solicitor General of the United States

?Wrone is neither a Warren Commission defender nor an outlandish conspiracy theorist but a careful historian who presents a strong case that the Warren Commission hastily and wrongly concluded that Oswald murdered Kennedy. . . . Strongly recommended.?

### *Library Journal*

?One of the most sober JFK assassination books of any year. Wrone seems to be without an ideologically motivated agenda. He seems interested only in finding and presenting the evidence responsibly. . . . Of all the Zapruder film analyses I have read, Wrone?s is the most lucid for a non-expert, and the calmest in tone.?

### *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

?Wrone?s knowledge of the assassination?s complex and daunting evidentiary base is unparalleled.??James H. Lesar, founder and president of the Assassination Archives and Research Center

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#### From the Back Cover

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##### **Troy Harlow:**

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or all their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the guide untitled The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK's Assassination can be great book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

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