



0. THE ASSASSINATION - Story Preface

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President and Mrs. Kennedy arrive at Love Field on the morning of November 23, 1963. This would be the last time that JFK descends the steps leading away from Air Force One. He was fatally shot not long after Cecil Stoughton took this picture. Public-domain image online via JFK Presidential Library and Museum.

NOTE: SOME LINKS IN THIS CHAPTER DEPICT **UNSETTLING AND DIFFICULT-TO-VIEW** MATERIAL.

Recording events at about 18.5 frames per second, [Zapruder's film](#) is the best evidence of the assassination of President Kennedy. The 26-second film, now owned by the American people through the U.S. National Archives (at a cost of \$16 million paid to Zapruder's heirs), begins routinely and ends horrifically.

Panning from left to right, Zapruder followed the motorcade as it moved through Dealey Plaza. A highway sign momentarily blocked Zapruder's view of the President's limo. Staying focused, however, the amateur continued filming.

Some experts believe the first shot was recorded between Frames 145-155. A young girl, running near the President's car, [stopped](#) and appears to stare at the [Book Depository](#).

On the sixth floor of the Book Depository, at that moment located behind the motorcade, Oswald allegedly fired twice more from the [southeast corner](#). Governor and Mrs. Connally, sitting in the front seat of the limo, later [said](#) they heard three shots coming from [behind them](#). Three spent casings were, in fact, [found](#) on the depository's sixth floor, near the window. Connally "immediately thought it was an assassination attempt."

Zapruder continued filming, although at times one can sense that his hands were unsteady.

Between frames 220 and 230, both Kennedy and Connally have been hit. At about frame 230, we can clearly see evidence that the President has been wounded. He grabs his throat and [slumps left](#), toward his wife. By Frame 235, Connally's body reacts to his collapsed lung.

[Seconds later](#) the [fatal shot](#) struck the right side of the President's head. The Zapruder film, shockingly explicit, recorded the horror. One cannot imagine what Jackie Kennedy was thinking at the moment [she witnessed](#) her husband's death blow. We do know what she said. Governor Connally [recalled](#) her words:

My God! I've got his brains in my hand!

Mercifully, portions of the President's skull remained attached by skin, allowing those sections to fall back into place after the energy of the explosion had [dissipated](#).

Mrs. Kennedy, likely in an effort to retrieve other portions of her husband's brain, [moved](#) to the trunk of the limo. [Clinton Hill](#), her Secret Service agent, [pushed](#) the First Lady [back](#) into the car and [covered](#) her and the President [with his body](#).

That heroic act (which [Hill discusses](#) forty-seven years later) came too late for the 35th President of the United States. He was dying as his limo sped to [Parkland Hospital](#). Shocked media personnel announced the unthinkable to the American people.

Ninety seconds after the shooting, police stormed the Book Depository building. An officer, hearing shots from that direction, had seen a flock of pigeons fly away from the roof of a building. He was "pretty sure" it was on

the "northwest corner" of the street or, in other words, the Book Depository.

A student, Amos Lee Euins, told police he'd heard shots and saw a shooter.

Oswald was in the second-floor lunch room when Officer Baker arrived. He was completely composed and not out-of-breath.

Serious students of the assassination have often been bothered by that fact because it raises a difficult question. How could Oswald (within the span of ninety seconds) have fired the last shot, hidden his rifle opposite the open sixth-floor window, raced down four flights of stairs to the lunch room, and be calmly in that room when the first officer arrived on the scene?

No police officer detained Oswald at the depository.

When the investigators reached the sixth floor, however, they found evidence of a sniper's perch.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-ASSASSINATION-Assassination-of-John-F.-Kennedy>

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-ASSASSINATION-Assassination-of-John-F.-Kennedy>

Media Stream



President and Mrs. Kennedy Arrive at Love Field

On the morning of November 23, 1963—a Friday—President and Mrs. Kennedy arrive at Love Field, in Dallas.

Their journey, that morning, was a very short one having flown, on Air Force One, from the nearby town of Ft. Worth.

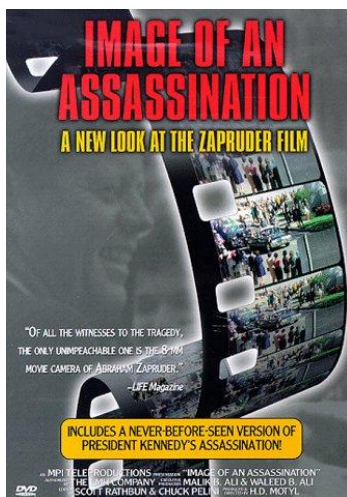
Not long after White-House photographer Cecil Stoughton took this picture, President Kennedy was fatally shot while his motorcade was passing through the streets of Dallas.

Click on the image for a better view.

Cecil Stoughton. White House Photographs. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston. Public Domain

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-and-Mrs.-Kennedy-Arrive-at-Love-Field>



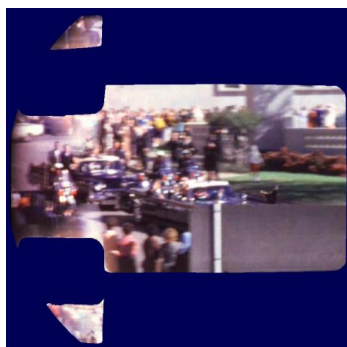
Zapruder Film: Eyewitness to History

Image of an Assassination - A New Look at the Zapruder Film is the digitized version of Zapruder's film. It includes Mr. Zapruder's interview with WFAA-TV, the day of the shooting, plus "we interrupt this broadcast" news clips.

Also included is much of the 1975 "Good Night America" program (when the public first saw the film on television). The horrified gasps, of the live audience, are audible.

View this asset at:

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JFK Assassination - Moment of First Shot

Zapruder Film, frame 190. U.S. National Archives.

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Texas Book Depository

U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Texas-Book-Depository>

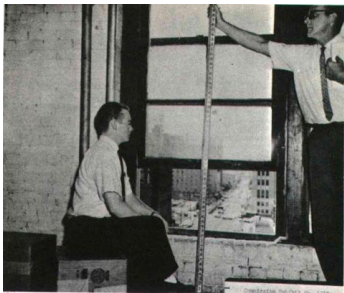


Southeast Corner of the Texas Book Depository

Warren Commission Exhibit 725, U.S. National Archives.

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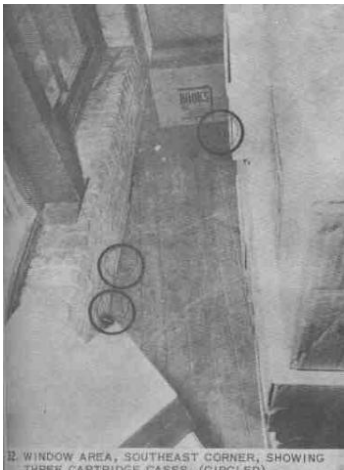
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The "Assassination Window"

U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Assassination-Window->

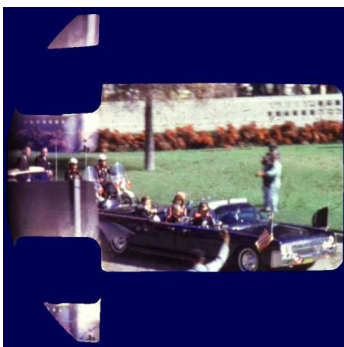


Three Spent Casings Near the "Assassination Window"

Warren Commission exhibit 512. U.S. National Archives.

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President Kennedy Appears to be Hit in the Throat

Zapruder Film, frame 230. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Kennedy-Appears-to-be-Hit-in-the-Throat>

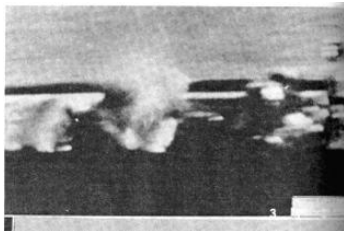


President Kennedy Slumps Left Toward Mrs. Kennedy

Zapruder Film, frame 312. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Kennedy-Slumps-Left-Toward-Mrs.-Kennedy>



President Kennedy Sustains a Fatal Bullet Wound

Zapruder Film, frame 313. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Kennedy-Sustains-a-Fatal-Bullet-Wound>



Mrs. Kennedy Witnesses the Fatal Shot

Zapruder Film, frame 335. U.S. National Archives.

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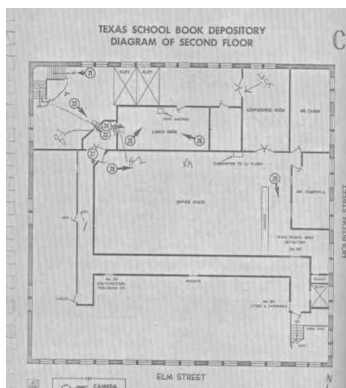


Diagram of Book Depository's Second Floor

Warren Commission Exhibit 497. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Diagram-of-Book-Depository-s-Second-Floor>



Hidden Rifle at the Book Depository

Warren Commission Exhibit 718. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hidden-Rifle-at-the-Book-Depository>

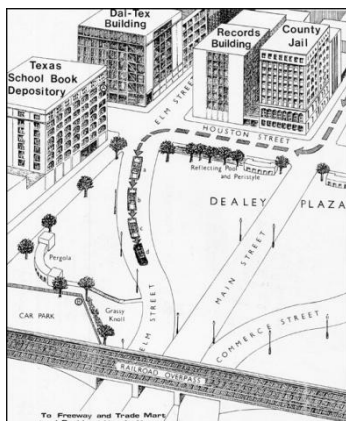


JFK Assassination - Location of Oswald's Hidden Rifle

Warren Commission Exhibit 516. U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

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Map Depicting Location of Depository and JFK's Limo

This drawing is from *The Assassination of President Kennedy*, by David Simkin.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Location-of-Depository-and-JFK-s-Limo>

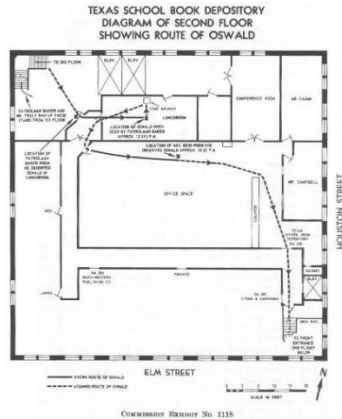


Mrs. Kennedy Cares for JFK After the Fatal Shot

Zapruder Film, frame 312.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mrs.-Kennedy-Cares-for-JFK-After-the-Fatal-Shot>



Oswald's Route in Depository Post-Shooting

Warren Commission Exhibit 1118. U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oswald-s-Route-in-Depository-Post-Shooting>



Presidential Limo at Parkland Hospital

U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Presidential-Limo-at-Parkland-Hospital>



Sixth-Floor Window Shortly After the Assassination

Warren Commission Exhibit 481. U.S. National Archives.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sixth-Floor-Window-Shortly-After-the-Assassination>



Sixth-Floor Window and Sniper's Perch

Warren Commission Exhibit 715. U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sixth-Floor-Window-and-Sniper-s-Perch>



Clint Hill - "It's My Fault"

Compilation of Clint Hill interview segments, given between 1975-1995. Clip begins with a short piece from the 11/22/93 "Today" interview with Sam Kinney (who was driving the car immediately behind JFK's limo). Clint Hill was riding on the left-front running board of that vehicle. Online, courtesy YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Clint-Hill-It-s-My-Fault->



Clint Hill and Gerald Blaine - The Kennedy Detail

November 8, 2010 interview - of Clint Hill and Gerald Blaine - by C-Span's Brian Lamb. Interview online, courtesy of C-Span's YouTube channel.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Clint-Hill-and-Gerald-Blaine-The-Kennedy-Detail>