

Background: Hemmings has been blessed with alien tech that allows him to see into the past an infinite number of times. He and his BFF Danté are in Dallas to sort out the truth behind the Kennedy assassination.

Once more, they're at Dealey Plaza, sitting on the same set of steps they were several hours earlier. It's still a little early for the pedestrian traffic to be in full-swing, so Hemmings and Danté are still pretty much by themselves.

"Here's the thing," Hemmings says, taking a bite out of a McDonald's breakfast sandwich. Before he carries on, he notes Danté slathering a BLT bagel with peanut butter. He fights the urge to kid his friend about this fixation...and the resultant bizarre food group mash-up. "I hope you intend to use something more *authentic* while we're here," he says instead, gesturing to Danté's handiwork. "Something from Texas."

"Ah, but you see," Danté enthuses, "this *is* from Texas! From El Paso, to be precise. It's a Tex-Mex product, a bi-national collaboration. A habenaro-tinged recipe. Wanna taste?"

For a split second, Hemmings is caught up in a flash of connection between Danté's effervescence and Annie's; their similarities in behaviour, in facial expressions could be jarring. It was cool when she was alive. Now, not so much. "Thank you, but no. Anyway, back to my lecture, here's the thing: This device changes the usual game of investi-

"Can we give it a name? This 'device'? Your glasses? Maybe something like 'back-time goggles'. Or 'pre-now spectacle spectacles'. Wait! How about 'time-rewind spyglasses'?"

"I'll think about it. So, months, years, even *decades* of traditional research can be accomplished in minutes. With far, far greater accuracy. Even given the limitations of accessing the appropriate spaces."

"So we're not going to be here for a week?"

"We'll have all the Dealey Plaza stuff done today. The basic mysteries solved this morning."

"Great. I know this place we can go for lunch," he says, taking a bite out of his concoction. "The setting is cool," he adds, speaking with an open -and full- mouth, "and the service is...*impeccable*."

Hemmings finishes his sandwich in silence. Well, *ponderous* silence. "Right," he eventually says. "What do you really know about the assassination?"

"Only that the idea that it was Oswald and Oswald alone is regarded by some as pure fantasy."

"Some' equals a vast majority of Americans, at any given point in time. Up to seventy-five percent of the population. *That* many. What else?"

"I saw Oliver Stone's 'JFK', so it's not like I'm Rip van Winkle."

"Remember much? From that Costner flick?"

"Besides not seeing it until about a decade *after* it came out?" he laughs. "Mostly how it hinted- How it made the case for conspiracy. I *loved* that scene with Donald Sutherland, where he provides all this information to Costner, filling in a shitload of blanks!"

"Mr. X."

"Yeah. It gave me goosebumps."

"We watched it on DVD," Hemmings points out. "The three of us."

Instinctively, Danté moves things forward. "So are you going to fill in the blanks as we go along?"

"Nah. I pretty much know what happened. Our visit will simply be *confirming* what I already feel is the truth. You view enough videos, you read enough material--"

"As *you* have."

"-and you pretty quickly get the lay of the land."

"And this particular section of land ain't flat?"

"Anything but, my friend."

"Do tell."

"Before I get into that, what did *you* make of what you saw this morning? Because you saw the *truth*. Not what the Zapruder film showed. Which, for the record, was doctored."

"How do you know that?"

"Testimony from one of the CIA technicians who was involved in the shenanigans that weekend. By the way," Hemmings says, turning to his right, looking at the concrete abutment to the pergola's retaining wall. After a few seconds, he holds

up his phone to Danté. "That's Abraham Zapruder. Behind him, his secretary from work, Marilyn Sitzman."

Danté stares at the screen. "I don't think I'm ever going to get used to this."

"It would be virtually impossible for us to key on him, to physically follow him back to his office, where he began to deal with the notoriety of his film, to physically trace it until it left Dallas, then continue from there to Washington, then to Rochester, New York. Never mind the amount of time involved. No, I think there's enough extant proof. Especially with the Doug Thorne interview of Dino Brugioni."

"And who are they when they're out and about?"

"Thorne is a pre-eminent JFK investigator. Brugioni is the aforementioned CIA employee. So; do you want me to slip into my Mr. X mode?"

"Like I'm gonna say 'No!'" Danté laughs.

"OK. Seeing as I brought up Zapruder, let's start there. *Literally.*" Hemmings leads Danté to the where the man and his assistant were standing. He smiles at the fact that Danté also has a bear's climbing ability...which makes sense, seeing as he lives in a tree. "OK; bring up The Zapruder Film." As Danté does, Hemmings goes into back-time and views the event.

"Got it, Boss Man."

"Hang on two secs... Right," Hemmings says, bringing his phone up to Danté's tablet. "Let's see if I can sync this... OK, go."

While Hemmings had viewed the assassination earlier in the morning, he'd done so at street level. Curbside. They're now viewing it from exactly where Zapruder had. "We're getting to the doctored parts," Hemmings announces. "There...and *there.*"

"Fuck."

"See how much was taken out? See how much was 'edited'?"

"Yours is entirely different from- From *mine.* So it's true; there *was* a conspiracy!"

"We've only just scratched the surface, and I believe it reasonable to think of *multiple* conspiracies. Let me tell you about the Zapruder film."

And so Hemmings -as only a university professor much beloved by his students for his sometimes 'dramatic' oration skills can- proceeds to reveal with great efficiency and exactitude, that no, it's not a tattered old box with sparkles of notoriety on it that's

become a terrible part of the American mythology, but an intricate origami, the delicately crafted truths of which are quite stunning.

“The common perception is that Abraham Zapruder used his Bell & Howell camera to record the assassination, and that not long after, it was taken to the Kodak facility in Dallas to be developed. Three copies were then made at Jamieson, a local company. Let’s call these pristine, unedited, unadulterated versions ‘Original’ and ‘1st-Gen Copies.’

“With a massing throng of local and national media clamouring at Zapruder’s door, LIFE Magazine Pacific Coast Regional Editor Richard Stolley bought the print rights for \$50,000. Zapruder’s Original would be loaned to the magazine for a week, after which it would be given one of the 1st-Gen Copies. A week after JFK was killed, Life published some black-and-white photos, single frames taken from the film, and that was that.

“The truth is a little more complicated. Quite a bit, actually.

“Sometime over the weekend of the 23rd/24th, LIFE re-negotiated the agreement with Zapruder. It wanted to purchase *all* rights to the film, including broadcast and theatrical, and was willing to pay \$150,000. What happened? Well, the publisher of LIFE was C.D. Jackson, and he’d had a very long career in US intelligence; he’d begun his career in London during WWII with the OSS, where developing propaganda was his speciality. Keep this in mind.

“On the afternoon of Saturday the 24th, LIFE had the Zapruder’s Original couriered to their Chicago facilities. Did it actually get there? Nobody can...or *wants*...to say. One of the things that’s fascinating is that Life Magazine’s Stolley did not accompany the film. An unusual choice, to say the least. But this pales in comparison to what else unfolded.

“Late Saturday evening, at around 10pm, two Secret Service agents arrived from the airport at the CIA NPIC (National Photographic Interpretation Center) in Washington, DC. There, Dino Brugioni, who was the Duty Officer for the weekend, met them with Bill Banfield, the head of the lab, and Ralph Pierce, the ‘photogramatrist’. When the box containing the 8mm film was opened, they realized that they didn’t have a projector, so Banfield had to go out and borrow one from a local store. When he returned, the three NPIC employees and the two agents watched the film for the first time. The film was projected several times and different speeds for the agents. Along the way, Brugioni explained that because the film was shot on a spring-wound camera, when projected, it would slow down from the beginning to the end. (It’s important to note that decades later, he maintained that he’d never seen the Zapruder film look the way it did that night. For example, the killshot/head-explosion was three or four feet in the air, unlike what is indicated in Frame 313 in the released version of the film. Additionally, it was pristine, with all the images crisp and clear. Not at all what the public was ever allowed to view.

“Brugioni and his co-workers made twelve to fifteen blowups, 4”x5” photos taken from the frames the two agents had requested. These were mounted on two 20” x22” boards that were joined by tape so they allowed for full and convenient viewing. Accompanying these were notes for each shot as prepared by Brugioni. Two sets of these boards were made. One for John A. McCone, head of the CIA, and one for the Secret Service agents, who left the facilities at 3am with the film...but without their boards. Brugioni and his crew cleaned up and left the NPIC at around 7am.

“Now things get really interesting; late in the evening of Sunday, November 24th, around 10pm, Homer McMan, head of the colour lab at NPIC was called in, as well as his assistant, Ben Hunter. Though Brugioni was the weekend Duty Officer, he was not called in...and in fact it would be 46 years before he was made aware of this second effort.

“Secret Service agent Bill Smith delivered what he claimed was the original film as prepared by the ‘Hawkeye Works’, code name for KODAK’s top secret R&D lab. McMann made three sets of twenty-eight prints to be mounted on three briefing boards.”

Danté stares wide-eyed at Hemmings. “And...?”

“Yeah,” an elderly woman says, who’s been standing just within earshot. “And...?”

“Hi,” Hemmings says, peering down at her.

“I know I didn’t pay for this tour, but-”

“I’m not a tour-guide, ma’am.”

“Maybe not...but I still want to hear the rest of your story.”

Hemmings gestures for Danté and he to return to ground-level. “The simple, ‘best guess’ answer is ‘Those photos from the Sunday effort are the ones that were in LIFE magazine. And the film they were taken from is the basis of what the world has come to- What *many* deride as ‘The Zapruder Film.’ Which was buried by LIFE for twelve years, before Geraldo Rivera broadcast it on ‘Good Night, America’ on ABC in 1975.”

“He was a handsome young man,” the woman declares. “Still is, really.”

“Did you watch it?” Danté asks. “That night?”

“Yes, I did.”

“And what did you think?”

“I thought ‘This is bunkum’,” she laughs.

“So what about the other copies? The Original and the three 1st-Gens?” Danté asks.

“Life ended up buying the Original and the one 1st-Gen copy Zapruder was still in possession of, for \$150,000.”

“But clearly, LIFE hasn’t ever shown it. Or the briefing boards.”

Hemmings shrugs. “The remaining two 1st-Gen copies were taken by the Secret Service. One was given to the CIA, one to the FBI.”

“My head hurts,” Danté complains.

“Here’s what some believe happened to Zapruder’s Camera Copy LIFE magazine ‘borrowed’ that weekend: It never made it to Chicago. It was ‘intercepted’ and flown to Washington, examined through to late Saturday evening, then taken to NPIC and Brugioni. By the way, Zapruder almost definitely showed *his* 1st-Gen copy that weekend.”

“That’s what I would have done,” the woman offers.

“One of the 1st-Gen copies given to the Secret Service on the Friday was flown to Washington, and given to James J Rowley, Director of the Secret Service by Agent Max Phillips. The other 1st-Gen copy was sent to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover at FBI headquarters. None of these four films ever saw the light of day again.”

“Wow,” the woman sighs.

“What *she* said!” Danté adds.

“So to wrap things up, a final intriguing thread for this wacky tapestry. When CIA Director McCone retired, the CIA’s copy of the Brugioni briefing boards came back to the NPIC. Without notes. His supervisor at the time told him to lock them up in a map cabinet that only he and Brugioni had keys for. Some years later, during the Rockefeller hearings about CIA domestic activities, Brugioni showed them to his boss, Director of NPIC John J. Hicks, who was absolutely livid. Ultimately, Brugioni had them packed up and sent to the new CIA Director.”

“So the Zapruder film as we know it-“

“Is a fake Or more accurately, it’s the expurgated, adulterated version. We’ve been lied to all along.”

"OK," Danté says, "taking that at face-value, what else have we been lied to about?"

"Everything!" Hemmings says, spreading his arms wide. "Starting with the fact that the Zapruder Original was doctored up in Rochester at the Hawkeye Works so that the photographic evidence wouldn't show that the killshot came from anywhere other than the sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository by way of Lee Harvey Oswald and that decrepit Carcano rifle of his."