

Max Phillips Interview
(Former SA, USSS)
Elk Grove, CA

Michelle Combs, ARRB

September 2, 1997

1. How much time does Phillips have this afternoon?
2. With tape running: Do I have your permission to tape this interview?
3. Today is September 2, 1997
4. Has Phillips ever been questioned by a government agency or commission about his activities at the Secret Service at the time of the Kennedy assassination?
5. Please describe your career with the Secret Service.

[Jan. 1959: Criminal Investigator and SA, USSS: White House Detail;
Nov. 1959: Criminal Investigator and SA, USSS;
Sept. 1962: Criminal Investigator and SA, USSS: Protective Research Section
(Washington, D.C.)
March 1966: Criminal Investigator and SA, Sacramento, CA]

6. Where was Phillips on November 22, 1963? [Austin, TX: Why was Phillips in Austin? Was it standard practice for PRS employees to advance a presidential trip?]
7. Who told Phillips that President Kennedy had been shot?
8. Who directed Phillips to do something about the assassination? [Chief James Rowley? PRS Chief Robert Bouck?]What were your orders?

[IF NECESSARY, SHOW PHILLIPS INVESTIGATIVE REPORT DATED Nov. 30, 1963]

9. When did Phillips arrive in Dallas? (How did he get to Dallas?)
10. Did Phillips arrive before Inspector Thomas Kelley did? Were Phillips' instructions different from Kelley's? Who took charge of Secret Service activity in Dallas? Did Phillips direct Forrest Sorrels (head of the Dallas field office)?

11. What did Phillips do in Dallas?[Ask for very specific information here. Follow the investigative report of Nov. 30, 1997.]

(If Phillips mentions interviewing Marina Oswald, ask him if he was present when USSS SA James "Mike" Howard and USSS SA Charles Kunkel interviewed Marina. Did Howard ever mention to Phillips that Howard had recorded (into a tape recorder) the contents of a small notebook belonging to Lee Harvey Oswald? If Phillips knows about this, ask whether he knows where this recording is. Ask Phillips if he knows where "Mike" Howard is, and Charles Kunkel, too.)

12. When did Phillips learn about the existence of a film depicting the presidential motorcade? Who told Phillips about it?

13. Did Phillips ever have the Zapruder film in his possession? Who gave it to Phillips?

[IF NECESSARY, SHOW PHILLIPS THE PHOTOCOPY OF THE KODAK BOX WITH HIS NAME ON IT.]

14. When (what time on November 22) did Phillips obtain the film? When Phillips received the film, did he obtain a receipt? Did the box with Phillips' name on it contain the out of camera Zapruder film or was it a copy?

15. Did Phillips view the film in Dallas? Who else saw it? Where did he first see the images on the film?

16. Ask Phillips to explain where the original Zapruder film was developed. Did Phillips go with Mr. Zapruder when the film from Mr. Zapruder's camera was being developed? Who went with Mr. Zapruder?

17. How did Chief Rowley learn about the existence of the Zapruder film? Who told Chief Rowley about this film depicting the motorcade?

18. How many copies of the original (out of camera) film were made? Were they all made at once in the same place?

[IF NECESSARY, SHOW PHILLIPS THE FBI DOCUMENT REFERRING TO 3 COPIES OF THE ZAPRUDER FILM.]

19. Ask Phillips to recount the chain of custody of the original (out of camera) Zapruder film. Ask Phillips to describe (in as much detail as possible) the chain of custody for the copies he (and/or the Secret Service--ask for names) obtained.

[IF NECESSARY, SHOW PHILLIPS THE RECEIPT SIGNED BY INSPECTOR KELLEY.]

20. Who decided how many copies of the Zapruder film should be made?

21. Does Phillips know whether any other copies of the Zapruder film were developed on November 22 or November 23?

22. How did Chief Rowley obtain a copy of the Zapruder film?

23. Once Phillips realized what the film depicted, did he ask someone at Secret Service headquarters what to do next? Did someone instruct Phillips to bring the film to Washington? Or someplace else? (If Phillips did not bring the film to Washington, why did Chief Rowley want him to return to Washington? Who carried the film to Chief Rowley?)

[IF NECESSARY, REFER TO THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT OF NOV. 30, 1963: PHILLIPS WAS TOLD TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON NOV. 23, 1963.]

24. If Phillips brought the film to Washington, could he say why *he* was chosen to bring the film?

25. Once Phillips was in Washington (Nov. 24?), what did Chief Rowley ask him to do?

26. Did Chief Rowley view the Zapruder film the night of November 23-24 (Saturday-Sunday?) Did others at Secret Service headquarters (or elsewhere) view the film that weekend? If so, who else saw it? Does Phillips remember any discussion about what to do next with the film?

27. Does Phillips recall whether the Secret Service had any still photographs made from frames of the Zapruder film? Did the Secret Service have the photographic equipment to develop still photographs from frames of the film? If still photographs had been developed, where would the Secret Service go to have photographs developed?

28. Did Phillips bring the Zapruder film to any location other than Chief Rowley's office? Does Phillips know whether any other Special Agent or Secret Service employee carried the Secret Service copy of the film to some other location for possible reproduction during the Nov. 23-24 weekend?

29. Does Phillips remember an employee of the Secret Service named "Bill Smith"?

30. Could Phillips describe any contacts he knows about between anyone at the Secret Service and the CIA during the weekend of November 23-24, 1963?

31. Did Phillips obtain copies of any other films besides the Zapruder film while he was in Dallas? Did Phillips obtain any cameras from members of the public who were standing in Dealy Plaza?

32. Several observers in Dealy Plaza mentioned being contacted or approached by a Secret Service agent within minutes of the assassination. Could Phillips comment on that? Were there any Secret Service employees standing in Dealy Plaza (i.e. not in the motorcade) on November 22?

33. Did Phillips ever observe any of the materials pertaining to President Kennedy's autopsy? Does Phillips recall whether Secret Service agents other than Roy Kellerman or William Greer or SA Leary were at the Bethesda Naval Hospital the night of the assassination?

34. Did Phillips see the presidential limousine during the weekend of Nov. 23-24, 1963?

35. Does Phillips have any records related to his work at the Secret Service in the early 1960s? Does Phillips know of any records that might be relevant to the assassination of President Kennedy that are not currently housed at the Secret Service?

36. Does Phillips have any other observations about the assassination of President Kennedy that we have not covered?

