

Editor's note

Vince Palamara's *Survivor's Guilt* is the definitive word on the Secret Service's role in the events of November 22, 1963. Through his extensive painstaking research, we gain insight into how many key decisions regarding that fateful day were made by just a few key members of the Service, and how essentially all of the crucial evidence was under the control of the Service. Yet his research also leads to the conclusion that many of the agents involved in the President's protection were unaware of the ramifications of the orders that they were following. With crystal clarity we begin to understand how the stage was set for the assassination to take place in Dealey Plaza.

Palamara takes a completely neutral stance with regard to the authenticity of the evidence collected by the Secret Service. This makes *Survivor's Guilt* an invaluable reference for anyone with an interest in the assassination, regardless of their views about the evidence. However, this assumption does grate somewhat with the views of the editors in a number of places. In particular, Palamara uses the Zapruder film, and other extant photographs and films of the assassination, to argue that a number of Secret Service agents lied under oath about the events they witnessed in Dealey Plaza. Palamara's assumption—which, to be fair, is a common mistake—is that films and photographs are unimpeachable evidence of the truth, and that contrary eyewitness testimony must be incorrect. This might hold some weight if the photographic evidence had an unimpeachable chain of custody—but in the case of the assassination, it does not.

The editors would have preferred that Palamara highlighted the discrepancies between the eyewitness testimony and the photographic evidence, without drawing any conclusions as to which is more believable. This might have provided some “closure” for those agents whose honesty has been impeached for over four decades (or, in the case of those who have passed on, for their families). But as this conflict arises in so few places in *Survivor's Guilt*, we agree that it is not worth spoiling the flow and coherence of the text by inserting editor's notes on each occasion; this general comment should suffice.