

FOSTER DEATH - CORRESPONDENCE FROM CONGRESS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 7, 1995

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The Honorable Kenneth Starr
Independent Counsel
1001 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 490 North
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Starr:

I am writing to provide you information which may be of technical assistance in your study of the death of Vincent Foster, particularly the ongoing dispute over the exact location of Mr. Foster's body in Fort Marcy Park.

It may be possible to use electronic image enhancement technology to process the "underexposed" Park Police photographs of the crime scene. That technology exists in many commercial labs, but perhaps the best such equipment in the country exists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where they have to "clean up" images coming back from planetary spacecraft.

Specifically, JPL uses a "scanning microdensitometer" to create a digital map of the negative, and then image enhancement software uses "contrast stretching" to get the most possible information out of the small amount of light which struck the film. The result of this is that a photo which was underexposed by even a factor of 100 or more can be transformed into a grainy but recognizable picture.

Furthermore, I understand that JPL has a track record of doing small image enhancement jobs free of charge for outside entities (eg. local police departments) as well as a "technology affiliate" mechanism for larger scale industrial projects.

If you or your staff wish to avail yourself of JPL's expertise on this matter, you should contact:

Kevin Hussey
Image Enhancement Laboratory
NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory
(818) 354-4016

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further service regarding this matter.

Yours truly,

Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress