

5/3/76

Ross Ralston Book, History's Verdict--PLAGIARISM

by: Howard Roffman

I am sending this to all who received the first memo re HV, except for Ralston himself. There is no question but that virtually everything in the book is cribbed from others' works, with no credit given, but in some cases, I think it is worse--overt plagiarism.

There are a couple of things I'm pretty sure come from PRESUMED GUILTY. One is his discussion of the fact that the clothing descriptions of man in 6th floor did not match that of LHO. This is at HV, 32-33. Also, at 44-45, he discusses LHO seeing Jarman-Norman on 1st floor in a manner very similar to my discussion in PG. However, this could come from Harold's WWI or from Sylvia's book, both of which also discussed this in somewhat less detail.

On page 69, Ralston claims credit for what is not his: "... my analysis of the evidence acquits Oswald of shooting officer Tippit..." The only part of what he presents which does this involves the time factor, including Belin's reconstruction of 17 min, 45 sec., and Bowley, none of which is his work. Harold was the first to note Belin's reconstruction, and later Sylvia did. Both Sylvia and Lane discussed Bowley.

There is one instance involving this Belin reconstruction where Ralston uses language very close to Sylvia's, suggesting a direct plagiarism. Ralston writes, "Belin, stopwatch in hand, re-enacted the journey in 17 minutes and 45 seconds." (p. 81) Sylvia wrote, "Commission Counsel David Belin reenacted the walk, stopwatch in hand, in 17 minutes, 45 seconds." (AAF, p. 255, B.2)

But most disturbing to me is that Ralston has lifted things directly out of two of Harold's books and reproduced them in facsimile. First, on p. 203 he prints the Secret Service report on Hudkins, CD 320, SS 767. This is ~~reproduced~~ reproduced directly out of Whitewash IV, page 141. I personally pasted up the two-page document onto one page when I was preparing the appendix to WWIV. The short text from p. 2 follows close at the bottom of page 1, and you can see where the dark edge of the Xerox page did not align perfectly. This misalignment is clearly visible in Ralston's book.

Second, at page 233, Ralston prints a comparison of the sketch of the supposed King suspect and the blow-up of the man in one of the "tramp" pictures. This is copied directly out of FRAME-UP, from page 465. There is no doubt about the source of Ralston's composit. The cropping on both pictures of the "tramp" is identical. Furthermore, where irregularities in the plate caused tiny white specks to appear in the F-U copy, the same specks appear in Ralston's. You can even see the edge of the paper Ralston used to block out the caption under the picture from F-U. In neither case, is any credit given to Harold. Furthermore, Ralston's book is copyrighted.