

Meagner, interviewed by telephone, Sunday night, 10:20--10:30 p.m.

by Victoria James, KLAC radio, Los Angeles, December 17, 1967

(Questions by Miss James reconstructed from memory and only approximate)

VJ: (Asks what Accessories shows)

SM: Well, the inaccuracies, misrepresentations, omissions, and distortions, in terms of the Commission's own published testimony and exhibits.

VJ: (Asks how long it took me to write the book and when I worked on it)

SM: September 1964...Well, I began to read it the minute it was issued, and I think that perhaps for the next month I studied the Report very carefully. In November, I think it was the day before Thanksgiving of 1964, I received the 26 volumes which I had ordered, and I began to work immediately on reading the volumes and annotating them extensively, and I began to draft some of my findings early in 1965, and continued to study the volumes and to write up my notes. But I found I had great difficulty in locating something that I had seen once and wanted to find again. So I decided to stop what I was doing, in the way of writing up the discrepancies, and to organize an index, so that I could find things again once I had seen them. I spent a good number of months compiling the subject index to the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits and the Report itself. That was subsequently published by the Scarecrow Press but its

now out of print. With the index completed, I resumed the writing of the manuscript which is now published as the book ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT.

VJ: (Did I suspect the Commission's work before the Report was published?)

SM: Well, I would say this: that while the Report was being written, or while the investigation was going on, I merely read everything that I could find in the newspapers or magazines. I was not doing research in any formal sense, I was just very interested, and so I read everything that was published that I could put my hands on.

VJ: (See preceding question)

SM: Well, you mean when it first came out, or before I read it? Well, I frankly had considerable doubt about it, because of the leaks, the constant leaks of information from Commission sources--both information about the views being formed by the Commission, which suggested that they were reaching exactly the same conclusions as the Dallas police had reached in something like 48 hours, or 24 hours, or even less, and partly because of the leak of many of the documentary materials of the Commission--the leak of photographs, the leak of the Ruby testimony, the leak of Oswald's diary and letters, some of which has never been explained, and I was very uneasy about the apparent working methods and the looseness of procedures of the Commission, plus their apparent predisposition toward the same findings as had already been made by the Dallas authorities.

VF: (Do I ascribe the defects to the fact that the Commission was hurried?)

SM: Well, this is the viewpoint taken by Epstein, who made a very careful study of the Commission's procedures and methodology, and I am inclined to agree that they worked in undue haste. I think they should have insisted on more time if they needed more time. But I don't think that this is sufficient to explain all of the defects in their work.

VF: (Am I a professional writer?)

SM: No, not in the sense that I've published anything before this, except some excerpts from the book and some book reviews of books dealing with this subject, but prior to this I have never published any writing, no.

VF: (Quotes Sauvage to effect that it is the profession's loss)

SM: I regard it as a compliment indeed.

VF: (What conclusions did I reach?)

SM: In a negative vein, I am afraid, in the sense of completely repudiating the findings of the Warren Commission. I am absolutely convinced, as are many other people, students of the evidence and those who are less specialized, I am absolutely convinced that this crime could not have been committed by any one man. I am also convinced that the Commission was very defective in its working methods--there were many oversights, there were failures to investigate, there was a persistent failure to correlate the material which was collected in the investigation and to reach a considered judgment and evaluation of the material. There certainly was a predisposition toward a specific set of findings. But I have to emphasize that over and above these fairly "innocent" defects, there was in many instances deliberate misrepresentation, even invention of facts, and I

regard this as indisputable, and I think that I have demonstrated it in the book, from the Commission's own records.

VI: (What do I think about the Garrison investigation?)

SM: I think of that in very similar terms to my feeling about the Warren Commission investigation. I think that also on very flimsy and dubious evidence, Mr. Garrison has implicated certain persons; he has been extremely reckless in his assertions, some of which I find nothing less than comical; he has been very careless in his references to the published evidence, the evidence in the 26 volumes, he has quoted it inaccurately or incompletely or out of context.

VII: (What do I think of allegations that Oswald was a Government agent?)

SM: Well, I personally found much reason to suspect that he had a clandestine affiliation with a government agency when I studied the history of his so-called defection to the Soviet Union and his relations with the State Department.

I have to admit that this almost forced me to conclude that he had gone over as some species of American agent. I do not find equally strong evidence for his being an American agent, an intelligence agent or a functionary of some kind, at about the period of the assassination, although I find considerable evidence to suggest that as a possibility. I would not reach any categorical conclusions, however.

VIII: (What do I think about the burning of evidence?)

SM: Well, not by the Commission, let me hasten to say, I don't know of any case in which the Commission burned any evidence. Dr. Humes, who was the chief surgeon at the autopsy, did burn his original draft of the autopsy report, but that was before the Commission came into existence. I don't think they can be

charged with that.

VJ: (How do I evaluate the Commission?)

SM: I believe that they were dishonest. They were dishonest, and I can't say that every single one of them was deliberately dishonest, but they might just as well have been. Whatever the individual's intention, or actual responsibility—when I say individual, I mean just, not only the members of the Commission but also their staff of lawyers—I don't mean to impute to each and every one of them the same degree of responsibility, but speaking of the work as a whole, it was a dishonest report.

VJ: (Do I think that pressure was put on the Commission from above?)

SM: I don't know, Miss James, it's conjectural, there are any number of possible answers, and it is quite possible that they sought to convince themselves that Oswald was the lone assassin, and in the course of their attempt at self-conviction they stretched the facts, they averted their eyes from the facts, and in some cases even changed the facts, changed a date...

VJ: (Can I recommend a newspaper to the audience which it can read to get a reliable account of developments on the Warren Report and Garrison?)

SM: Any newspaper? No, I think they should read everything, and not consider any one publication as being necessarily authoritative, they should make their own judgments, they should read everything published and reach their own conclusion. No one should yield to any publication or any authority their right to think for themselves...

VJ: (Says that she can advise everyone to read Accessories, a fascinating and authoritative work)

SM: Thank you, that's kind of you, Miss James.

VJ: (Who is the publisher?)

SM: It's the Bobbs-Merrill Co.

VJ: (Do I mind mentioning the price?)

SM: It's eight dollars and fifty cents, but I believe it's in all public libraries, and I'll be very happy if people read library copies, truly, because I would just like them to read it, and to judge it with all the severity

that they care to, I don't say that it's the greatest book ever written on the subject, but I think that it should at least get a hearing, and I hope people will read it, in their libraries, at least.

VJ: (Thanks me for being interviewed)

SM: Thank you very much, Miss James.