

2 July 1966

The Editor
THE NEW YORK TIMES
Times Square
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Dear Sir,

Your Supreme Court correspondent, Fred Graham, began his review of Inquest by Edward Jay Epstein and Whitewash by Harold Weisberg with the admission to critics of the Warren Report to keep their eye upon the donut and not upon the hole. The blithe Mr. Graham, whose vision apparently is impaired both by his high assignment as Supreme Court correspondent, and also by ignorance of the Warren Commission's Hearings and Exhibits, has failed to perceive that there is no donut surrounding the hole in this case.

Graham asserts that Marina Oswald's testimony was one of the most troubling aspects of the Commission's investigation, not because she wished to mislead the Commission but because she was too anxious to say what she thought the Commission wanted to hear. Had he read Marina Oswald's testimony before the Commission in her several appearances and the fifty-odd reports of interviews with her conducted by federal investigators, Graham would realize that this witness was a self-confessed liar. Not only did she admit falsehoods (Hearings, Volume I, pages 11 and 28) but she told further lies in the very act of the admission (Commission Exhibits 1781 and 1792, pp. 6-8). Although the Warren Report impeaches a number of witnesses with little or no justification for discrediting their testimony or their character, it contains no hint that the main witness against the accused, Marina Oswald, was a self-confessed liar. Graham, for his part, does not trouble to mention that in the first instance the Chief Justice refused to permit any cross-examination of Marina Oswald, despite the staff lawyers' distrust of her—information which is revealed for the first time in Epstein's book Inquest.

I do commend Graham for recognizing that when Epstein labels the Warren Report "political truth" he really means deliberate fraud. I agree with Graham's interpretation of "political truth" and I agree with Epstein's judgment that the Warren Report is a deliberate fraud. Indeed, I shall put Graham's interpretation to good use in my running argument with fellow-critics who believe that Epstein was too easy on the Commission.

Graham concedes that the single-missile hypothesis "is porous" but he complains that no other explanation makes any sense. With respect, it is Graham who makes no sense. Of course there are other explanations that make sense—one is that an assassin or assassins were stationed on the grassy knoll. Any Sunday student of the evidence knows that there is a considerable body of testimony suggesting that the grassy knoll was one source of the shots, and that the Commission assiduously failed to follow up clues pointing in that direction.

Graham complains that Epstein "did not talk to Commander James J. Humes," the autopsy surgeon. Again, Graham betrays his failure to do his homework.

Commander Hanes' persistent refusal to discuss the autopsy or any other aspect of the evidence is a matter of Record--as early as December 6, 1963, in your own newspaper, which quoted Hanes as saying that he had been forbidden to talk, and as recently as June 5, 1966, in the Detroit News. Indeed, none of the doctors or the lawyers have been able to come up with any material facts or any responsive arguments against Epstein's contention that the autopsy report was fabricated in order to sustain an untenable single-missile/long-assassin hypothesis--and even Graham, however much he is disposed toward the Warren Report and against its critics, should realize how significant that is, when Epstein's book has already been in the headlines for more than a month.

Graham may be correct when he says that an autopsy report was sent to the Commission by the Secret Service on December 20, 1963--but what is his authority for saying what that autopsy report said? I doubt that it said that the first bullet "passed through and out of the President's neck"--especially when the Secret Service, with that autopsy report in its hands, conducted re-enactment experiments in Dallas on December 5, 1963, in order to determine how the President was shot in the front from behind, as reported in your own newspaper of December 6, 1963 in a story by Joseph Lathus.

The joint review gives very little attention indeed to Harold Weisberg's book Whitewash. Apparently Graham was offended by Weisberg's questioning of "so many of the points" made in the Warren Report and found it "difficult to believe" that any document could be so completely corrupt. Let me point out that no one is asking Graham to "believe" anything--Weisberg has given chapter and verse in every single instance, and if Graham or anyone else can fault him on the facts, let them proceed.

Although I find Graham's review of Inquest and Whitewash supercilious, uninformed, and unfair, he has at least spared me the shock and consternation of finding a fair review in the pages of The New York Times, which has long since committed itself to the Warren Report, come what may. After acting as the midwife, nurse, and guardian to the Report, the Times can scarcely do less than defend it, to the death.

But, gentlemen, when will you realize that it is dead?

Yours sincerely,

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