

Who was the real King assassin?

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FRAME-UP. The Martin Luther King/James Earl Ray Case Containing Suppressed Evidence. By Harold Weisberg. Outerbridge & Dienstfrey. \$10.

By Elmer Gertz

Harold Weisberg, one of the severest critics of the Warren Report on the Kennedy assassination, believes that there was a gigantic conspiracy to suppress the truth, and has written at great length about both important and obscure aspects of the case in a fashion that is excessively difficult to follow.

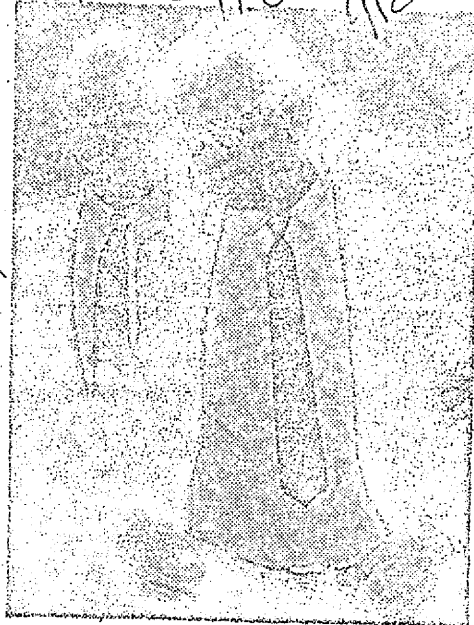
The most depressing commentary on his work is that he was one of the experts associated with the New Orleans District Attorney, Jim Garrison, in his aborted frame-up of Clay Shaw.

Now Weisberg cries frame-up with respect to the conviction of James Earl Ray for the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., although Ray pleaded guilty in open court when represented by Percy Foreman, one of the most skillful and successful criminal lawyers of modern times. But it is true that Weisberg has dug up much material, some of it properly designated as suppressed, that must give any reasonable and unprejudiced person pause.

HE SHOWS that Percy Foreman, who has often boasted of his ability to exact harsh penance from his clients in the form of fees of prodigious size, was excessively eager to persuade Ray to plead guilty and to get the case out of the way.

Paid or promised thousands of dollars through the literary intercessions of the famous writer, William Bradford Huie, Foreman was niggardly to the extreme in advancing a mere \$500 to Ray's brother Jerry. He made it expressly "contingent upon the plea of guilty and sentence going through . . . without any unseemly conduct on your (Ray's) part in court." In yet another letter, Foreman

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James Earl Ray being moved last year to a hearing for a new trial.

stressed his willingness to make certain adjustments of his fee arrangement "if plea is entered and the sentence accepted and no embarrassing circumstances take place in the court room . . ."

What Foreman feared is that Ray would kick over the traces, deny his guilt after all and insist upon a trial at which he would proclaim the existence of a conspiracy in the assassination of Dr. King.

MUCH OF THE world, including those involved in the case, believes that there was such a conspiracy, more so than in the case of the death of President Kennedy. It is too much to believe that Ray could have wandered about so much of the world, making so many arrangements requiring skill and funds beyond his capabilities and means without assistance. Weisberg asks many unanswered questions, closing with four closely packed pages of interrogations, many of them of great consequence.

In short, he has written a book that has a reasonable, if overstated and marred, thesis. Perhaps some one better able to assemble and analyze strong points and to discard the chaff will come up with answers, rather than questions. By his irresistible itch to claim too much, Weisberg has proved too little. It is, hopefully, not too late to expect more, and possibly even a well-written book.

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