

Memorandum: Harold Weisberg, Vince Salandria, & other critics

From: Gary Schoener

Re: Film Greetings, directed by Brian De Palma

Date: May 11, 1969

This flick is a spoof on a peeping tom, sex crazed draft age guy, and a Warren Report critic. The critic is really flagellated in the flick, and at the end, is seemingly shot (or maybe not) while waiting to meet the nephew of Earlene Roberts in Battery Park in NY to pass him a copy of Six Second's in Dallas which he stole for him. It is flashed on the screen that he is the #18th person connected with the case to meet a mysterious death.

They do a spoof on the blowing up of the photos, and use a poster size blowup of one of Wilma Bond's photos. Before it is blown up he talks about a police officer shooting from the front, and although it is censored every time, it sounds like he is saying Tippit. The blowup shows a white patch behind the fence, and the critic claims that it blows the case wide open. This is really bad news and the audience goes wild.

Later he is shown diagraming (correctly according to the autopsy measurements) in a very exacting fashion the president's neck and back wounds on a nude girl. He then puts his shirt on her, with a wound marked 5 3/4 inches down, and lines them up. Then, he screams "Aha" and goes through elaborate and confusing explanation, and concludes that to get wounds like this the President would have had to have been standing on his head at the time. Then he reaches for the Dell edition of Whitewash II and screams "Weisberg was right--the FBI falsified the Bethesda autopsy report." At other points in the flick he is muttering about the truth, and the government doesn't have the right to lie, etc. In the background in a number of scenes is Tink's book. Also seen are issues of the NY Review of Books (Popkin's article), Life, and what appears to be an open issue of either Life or Paris-Match with a layout of frames the same as in the Memorial Issue of Life, but for the strange fact that it is in black and white. Since the budget of the flick was only supposed to be \$48,000, it was not surprising to see the Bond photo only blowup in black and white, but I have never seen a black and white version of the life layout. Everything else appeared to be authentic. In Battery Park he was reading the National Enquirer issue about James Tague.

At another point he appears to be reading from the Warren Report, although it is not, and reads the story of LHO's return to the rooming house and Earlene's hearing of the cop's car's horn, and seeing of the car. Then, while working at Bookmasters in NY, a crazy paranoid guy comes in and looks at Tink's book, when the critic comes over and tells him how good the book is and mentions that it has the lowdowns on the deaths, Earlene Roberts, etc. It turns out that the paranoid guy is Earlene Roberts' nephew and is marked for death #17, and he tells the critic that he is #18. He is afraid to steal the book or buy it (doesn't want to leave cash register receipts, etc) and gets the critic to steal it for him. They are to meet at Battery Park, but he doesn't show, and the critic appears to get shot. Ironically, one of the guys who reviewed the film said that he was shot by a lone assassin, but at the end some people were not sure that he had been shot (thought that he had cracked up and was imagining it and faking) while others thought that he had been, but there was no indication by whom or why, except that the number 18 in red (symbolic of the deaths and paranoia) flashed on the screen just before a shot seemed to have occurred.

I have been taking much ribbing over the film because of the fact that not only was the guy a critic, but he continually used the phrase "unbelievable" which is something I do, and because I have shown my roommates blowups of the knoll, talked about the discrepancies in the autopsy, etc.

I would be curious to know if any of the critics know any of the people connected with the flick since I would be curious to know where the idea came from. It is a real knock to the critics and makes a laughing stock out of us, so it is worth looking into a bit. It has been shown in a few big theaters and is generally billed as an underground protest film. It is strange to see a movie with a Warren Report critic as a main character.