

Weisberg: Rumor is, he doesn't sleep

WHITEWASH: Report on the Warren Report; \$5.25.

WHITEWASH II: FBI-Secret Service Cover-up; \$5.25.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH; \$5.25.

WHITEWASH IV: The Secret Assassination Transcript; \$6.25.

Books must be ordered from the author: Harold Weisberg, Route 8, Frederick, Md. 21701.

Reviewed by Richard Raznlkov

Representative Henry Gonzalez of Texas no doubt felt a high emotion as he placed HR 204 in the hopper. This resolution, which calls for a new Congressional inquiry into the assassinations of both Kennedys and Martin Luther King, is for many the culmination of a long and difficult struggle to force Congress to act; for others, it is the seed of a new struggle, the beginnings only of a new assault upon the government lies which characterize its "investigations" into the causes of and reasons for these murders.

Harold Weisberg probably didn't take the day off in celebration: he doesn't have that kind of time to spare. Since 1964, when he began work on *Whitewash*, the book no publisher had the guts to print, Weisberg seems hardly to have paused for breath. He has churned out six major books, all of them valuable references for investigators, all of them written in a style so swollen and egotistical that many readers will need hip boots and seeing eye dogs for the task; yet they are more than worth the trouble, for what Weisberg lacks in tact and careful writing he makes up for in insight and careful research.

Barry Goldwater, who has made a gift to the world of many ridiculous statements, nevertheless once expressed an important truth: "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." In his pursuit of John Kennedy's killers, Weisberg has exhibited no moderation at all. In his "spare" time, in between books, he has found the opportunity to ransack the outer darkness of the National Archives, sue the government for relevant documents under the Freedom of Information Act, and assist New Orleans' District Attorney Jim Garrison's fearless but doomed investigation. It is understandable that rumors about Weisberg include the suggestion that he never sleeps. There are problems with his books: they are unedited, sometimes hard to follow, and overloaded with personal pronouns. And yet ... thank God for the bastard! Because Weisberg, warts and all, has made — and is making — a great contribution in the search for truth.

Whitewash, the first book, was privately printed in 1966. With no commercial backing, relying basically upon word-of-mouth, it caused a sensation. Its careful analysis of but some of the countless errors and falsehoods of the Warren Report helped to focus national attention on the case in a way that the perpetrators of this monumental fraud had not foreseen; it, along with Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment*, contributed greatly to the growing public awareness of the conspiracy which murdered the President.

The work was continued in *Whitewash II: The FBI-Secret Service Cover-up*, which helped expose the complicity of government agencies in the case. Using material from the Commission's own 26 volumes of testimony and exhibits, Weisberg completed his demolition of the government case and began the search for the real murderers of the President. Here, also, Weisberg began his excavation of the Archives, the national burial ground for information thought too important to be entrusted to

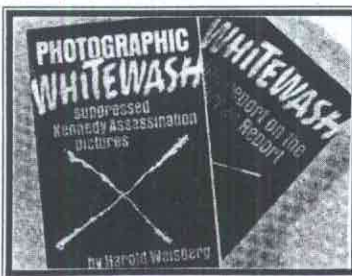


Harold Weisberg

the American people. By this time, the Warren Report and its absurd conclusions had been discredited in the minds of most citizens. National opinion polls showed fully two-thirds of the people did not believe the government fantasy that Lee Harvey Oswald alone had killed John Kennedy.

Then came the Garrison investigation. A fairly conservative district attorney, Garrison had begun a secret inquiry into Oswald's activities in New Orleans in the summer of 1963. His work began when Senator Long confided his doubts about the Warren Report and Garrison in turn had read the full 26 volumes. At first, Garrison thought that Oswald was perhaps in league with left-wing Castro supporters to murder Kennedy. Then, gradually, the truth began to appear. Oswald's New Orleans' connections and activities spoke clearly of intelligence agency work. When news of the new investigation broke, Garrison had to make his inquiry public. At a press conference, Garrison announced, "let justice be done, though the heavens fall; we seek the truth." At his side was Harold Weisberg.

Weisberg was a key source of basic material in the New Orleans investigation. It is not his fault any more than it is Garrison's that key witnesses were bribed or murdered, that Governors such as Reagan and Connally would not extradite men whom the New Orleans' Parish Grand Jury had indicted for murder, that evidence was stolen out of Garrison's



files by once-trusted aides, that the national press sought to destroy Garrison before he could get Clay Shaw to trial. It is not Weisberg's fault any more than it is Garrison's, that FBI agents refused to testify under the cloak of "executive privilege," that the government would not surrender subpoenaed documents, that the Zapruder film copy which Time-Life supplied under court order was purposely blurred, that reporters covering the trial ignored the startling proof of conspiracy dragged even from the lips of reluctant federal witnesses in favor of the story of Shaw's ultimate (and questionable) "acquittal."

Weisberg's *Oswald in New Orleans: Conspiracy with the CIA* (a book he didn't himself publish and now virtually unobtainable), helped begin the second stage of inquiry. We had learned that a conspiracy existed to kill Kennedy and that the truth had been hidden by powerful government and industrial forces; now, the search began in earnest to discover the origins of the plot and the identities of the killers.

After the Watergate scandal has opened the eyes of many Americans, new evidence of conspiracy in the murders of both John and Robert Kennedy has become available. Researchers and investigators are speaking to packed auditoriums throughout the country. Gonzalez has introduced his vital Resolution in the House. Three national magazines have run important articles which delineate some of the facts. We are closer than ever before to saving the future of our country from the violence of the recent past.

And Weisberg? He has been pretty busy himself. Following years of persistence, he has succeeded in prying loose from the death-grip of the federal government a copy of a transcript of a most important and meaningful secret meeting of the Warren Commission. This transcript of a meeting held January 27, 1964, exposes once and for all the true intent of that body of supposedly honorable men. The meeting was called to discuss a "disturbing rumor," relayed to the Commission by the chief law enforcement officer of Texas, that Oswald had been an FBI informant, and that he had other connections with U.S. intelligence work.

How did this Commission, charged with the responsibility of investigating the President's murder, deal with this little problem? It decided not to investigate. The transcript is loaded with cynical comments. Allen Dulles, the former chief of the CIA whom Kennedy had fired after the Bay of Pigs, said that the CIA and FBI would never reveal the status of any agent, least of all Oswald. The Commissioners were in complete agreement that to send their own investigators into the field would annoy J. Edgar Hoover, and that the truth was not worth annoying him. In the end, amidst a sickening display of mutual congratulation, the members of the President's Commission decided to ask Hoover whether Oswald had been an agent!

The publication of this transcript with supporting documents by Weisberg marks another great blow this investigator has struck against official government deceit. It makes absolutely clear to anyone the bankruptcy of the "work" performed by these trained seals. It undermines the credibility of the Rockefeller Commission, whose current "investigation" of the CIA is being directed by David Belin, one of the Warren Commission's chief attorneys. And it provides a measure of the man who now sits in the White House, Gerald Ford, because Ford is the last living member of that infamous Commission.

Robert Kennedy once observed that we live in strange times when simple honesty passes for courage. Harold Weisberg seems that rarity, an honest man. Garrison, writing in the forward to one of Weisberg's books, said, "If we will not fight for the truth now — when our President has been shot down in the streets and his murderers remain untouched by justice — it is not likely that we will ever have another chance." Weisberg's work, and the books it has produced, remain a major contribution in that fight.