Deferring consideration of the content of the transcript for a moment, I note here these extraordinary features of the document:

1. On the cover page is the notation:

> Prepared by a Department of Defense stenotypist with the proper security clearance from reporter's notes among the records of the Commission in the National Archives at the request of the General Services Administration in August 1974[15]

2. Originally the record of this meeting, held from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. on January 22, 1964 carried the classification "Top Secret." It was declassified on 3/27/75 as evidenced by a stamped entry on page 1.

3. The last four words typed on the last page of the transcript, page 13, read: "off the record. E N D".[16] I submit that this is truly a perplexing reality: The Commissioners went off the record in a classified meeting for which there is no record in the National Archives listing of meetings of the Commission.

This extraordinary meeting of January 22 became the context for a subsequent meeting on January 27, a fascinating account of which was published by Harold Weisberg in 1974. In my opinion, this writing, titled *Whitewash IV: Top Secret JFK Assassination Transcript* should be required reading by any historian choosing to comment on the Commission's investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination.

(In passing through I note here the difficulty experienced by Harold Weisberg, a dedicated Kennedy assassination researcher, who spent countless hours, resources and energy-draining effort in an eight-year legal battle to secure a copy of that transcript. And I also note this: though Mr. Weisberg's work has been routinely belittled--to say nothing of the occasional ridicule heaped upon him personally--by defenders of the work of the Warren Commission and its *Report*, I have never read a rationally developed analytical criticism of his work, which generated, in thirty years, nine books on different aspects of the President John F. Kennedy assassination story.)

The subject of Mr. Weisberg's writing in *Whitewash IV* is the phenomenon of government secrecy. And I submit that future historians will be hard-pressed to fault the logic in the following insightful perception Weisberg offers on the subject of government secrecy.

> TOP Secret evidence about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy still an official secret ten years after his murder?
>
> So much a secret it is described as an urgent matter of national security?
>
> And so urgent a matter of national security that when after six years of unsuccessful effort I went to court to get it the government suborned perjury and submitted a perjurious affidavit, serious crimes, to deceive a conscientious judge into continuing to keep this evidence an utmost state secret?
>
> What kind of evidence could this be when the government's own official 'investigation' of John F. Kennedy's assassination concluded that it was the work of a single, alienated man?
>
> If the evidence behind the Report it issued supports the conclusion of the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald alone assassinated John F. Kennedy, why should it be necessary to suppress <u>any</u> evidence? More--describe evidence so long suppressed as still necessary to the 'national security'?
>
> The two contradict each other.
>
> If Oswald was alone, there was no conspiracy, nothing to withhold that could in any way conceivably relate to anything that could be called the 'national security.'
>
> .....
>
> When I say 'secret' I mean so secret it [the Commission] refused to let its own staff attend its executive sessions. It planned for its staff never to be able to read the transcripts of these executive or secret sessions.
>
> .....
>
> Now why, if JFK had been assassinated and the country and the world turned around by just three shots fired by Oswald alone, did this Commission have to practice such secrecy?
>
> The obvious answer is that it knew its work could not survive any critical examination.
>
> .....
>
> The published official evidence alone left no basis for believing any word of the Report save that the President was dead. To this day [1974] no single person has written or phoned to complain of a single substantive error in my writing. Nobody has alleged it in countless confrontations in talk-shows and debates.[17]

At this point, I enter a disclaimer: Though I am interested in the Warren Commission's Executive Sessions of January 22/27 for purpose of suggested reading for future historians, I am not

interested in offering them here in argument relating to a rumor that subsequent developments established to be false. Rather, the entire episode is offered for consideration in the eventual, inevitable historical evaluation of the quality of the Commission mindset that governed evaluation of the rumor.

The Executive Session of Wednesday, January 22 was in the nature of an emergency meeting held between 5:30 and 7 p.m. A scheduled meeting had been held on January 21; it recessed at 5:50 p.m. and was scheduled to reconvene on January 27. The emergency nature of the January 22 meeting was clear from the opening remarks of the Chairman, Chief Justice Warren:

> Gentlemen: I called this meeting of the Commission because of something that developed today that I thought every member of the Commission should have knowledge of, something that you shouldn't hear from the public before you had an opportunity to think about it. I will just have Mr. Rawkin tell you the story from the beginning.
>
> Mr. Rawkin: Mr. Wagner Carr, the Attorney General of Texas, called me at 11:10 this morning and said that the word had come out, he wanted to get it to me at the first moment, that Oswald was acting as an FBI Undercover Agent, and that they had the information of his badge which was given as Number 179, and that he was being paid two hundred a month from September of 1962 up through the time of the assassination. I asked what the source of this was, and he said that he understood the information had been made available so that Defense Counsel for Ruby had that information, that he knew the press had the information, and he didn't know exactly where Wade had gotten the information, but he was a former FBI agent.[18]

I recall here mention of the notice which appears on the cover sheet of the transcript of this January 22 meeting:

> Prepared by a Department of Defense stenotypist with the proper security clearance from reporter's notes among the records of the Commission in the National Archives at the request of the General Services Administration in August 1974[.]

There are numerous errors, understandable because the stenotypist is compiling a record from notes taken more than 12 years earlier, that are obvious but need correction here for sake of clarity in recognizing the names of persons: